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LITERARY EVIDENCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

AMONG THE ANCIENT ROMANS

by

PETER L. LINDSAY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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AMONG THE ANCIENT ROMANS

by

PETER L. LINDSAY



A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

FACULTY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

AUGUST, 1967.







UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read,  
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for  
acceptance, a thesis entitled "Literary Evidence of  
Physical Education Among the Ancient Romans," submitted  
by Peter L. Lindsay, in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study has been to present Roman physical education as seen through the translated words of the authors of the period. Wherever possible, translations have been taken from the Loeb Classical Library editions. Illustrations selected from ancient works of art have been included to give the literary selections clearer meaning. Each chapter is introduced by a summary of the salient points presented in the literary selections. The material has been chosen from references to: attitudes towards physical exercise, ball games, baths, public games, chariot racing, athletics, boxing, wrestling, hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, and minor physical activities.

The dominant force behind the work has been a desire to supplement the standard texts in physical education with source material readily available to both the student and the lecturer.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the guidance and personal energies which the members of the committee have given during the production of the thesis. To Dr. Howell, whose prompt consideration was extended to me, as it is to all his students; to Dean Van Vliet, whose professional advice was willingly given; to Dr. MacKenzie, whose guidance through classical references was essential; to the staff of the Reference Room in the Cameron Library--my sincere thanks.





## PREFACE

The primary purpose of this study has been to bring together, in English translation, the principal ancient literary sources pertaining to physical education among the ancient Romans. Allied with this has been the collation of works of art which illustrate the literary material. The aim, therefore, has not been to write a history of physical education in ancient Rome, but rather to present the literary testimonia for such; and since no period of the Roman history of the subject can be adequately studied from the pen of any one historian of the ancient world, a collection of the scattered sources of information must have a certain value.

The works of poets, statesmen and philosophers, however, must necessarily be translated and interpreted, and during this process some of the original intent is sometimes lost. Pictures are therefore included, not merely as illustrations of literary documents which give the written words new emphasis, but also as an integral part of the literature of the period, and a direct means of communication.

The Roman civilization spanned many centuries, while the Empire extended over a vast territorial expanse. Because of these formidable dimensions, the principal time span of this study has encompassed the last century B.C. and the first two centuries A.D. These boundaries, however, have not been entirely rigid, and where a writer outside the period had pertinent material not elsewhere available, this source was considered. The literary selections were taken wherever possible from the Loeb Classical Library editions, which are widely accepted as reputable translations.





In spite of the emphasis placed on physical education in recent years, great diversities of opinion exist as to what actually is meant by the term. Nash<sup>1</sup> confirms this confusion in stating that physical education means one thing to the athletic coach, another to the school administrator, and another to the general public. The problem appears to lie in the fact that man suffers from a tyranny of words. Physical education is not a specific thing, it is a concept, and, as such, defies exact definition. It is the overall schema which binds together the athletic coach, the school administrator and the general public. In applying the term to the Romans, this writer has included sports, physical recreation, and physical exercise. The Roman attitude to sport is implied in the word ludi which refers to amusements or entertainments. In all probability, there can be no great difference in concept between Marcus Latinum's day at the gladiatorial contests or the chariot-races, and Bill Smith's "taking in" a boxing match or a horse race. The latter would most certainly consider an afternoon at the races, his "sport."

In collating the writings of Roman authors on physical activity, it is expected that their attitudes constitute the dominant theme in the thesis. Consequently, the following work is intended as a supplement to standard texts on the history of physical education.

In each of the chapters of the thesis, the emphasis has been placed on the literary references pertaining to the various activities. These have been arranged in as near to chronological order as possible,

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<sup>1</sup>Jay B. Nash, Physical Education--Its Interpretations and Objectives, (Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown and Co., 1963), p. 17.





although the exact dates of some authors is unknown. A short discussion introduces each chapter, and attempts to gather together the salient points presented in the literary selections; the illustrations conclude the chapter.





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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CSLP	Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum Paravianum
IGRR	Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes
TAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The growth of Rome from a small hamlet on the Palatine into the greatest city of the ancient world may be regarded as one of the wonders of antiquity. It had a large and closely packed population, which Carcopino estimates at approximately one and a half million in the second century A.D.<sup>1</sup> After ten centuries, when Constantine transferred the capital of the Empire to Byzantium, Rome covered an area almost twelve miles in circumference. The banks of the Tiber were crowded with docks and quays to ensure a regular supply of provisions for its inhabitants. Eleven aqueducts furnished a daily water supply, calculated at 350 million gallons. In the fourth century A.D. the city had 11 public and 856 private baths, 37 gates, 423 parishes, 29 main roads from the centre to the outskirts (with a large number of minor streets, alleys, and small squares scattered among the network of streets), 8 bridges, 190 granaries, 2 large markets, 254 mills, 8 large parks, 11 forums, 10 basilicas, 37 marble arches, 1,352 fountains, 28 libraries, 2 circuses, 2 amphitheatres, 2 naumachiae for naval shows, and 4 gladiatorial barracks.<sup>2</sup>

The majesty of the city of Rome, however, was a reflection of the extent of the Roman Empire. From north to south, this Empire stretched

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome, (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1941), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>U. E. Paoli, Rome, Its People Life and Customs, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1963), p. 1.





from the Great Wall in Britain, and from the Rhine, the Danube, and the Black Sea, to the Atlas Mountains, the Sahara Desert, and into the Sudan. On the west it was bounded by the Atlantic, on the east by the Arabian Desert and Mesopotamia. The Empire was approximately 2,000 miles from north to south, and 3,000 miles from east to west. Its area was roughly 2,500,000 square miles, and its population was estimated at 100,000,000.<sup>3</sup>

Within this territorial expanse, there were cities and prosperous municipalities which had a large measure of local self-government. Prior to the Social War of 90-88 B.C., full Roman citizenship was held only by the free men of Rome, but this war forced the Romans to extend full citizenship to all the Italians. By the advent of Christianity, all free men south of the Alps were Roman citizens. Julius Caesar granted citizenship to whole towns and tribes outside Italy and to those who had served in the army, whatever their nationality, and he encouraged the establishment of colonies by Roman citizens throughout the Empire.<sup>4</sup> Under later emperors, such as Trajan and Hadrian, the citizen franchise included the upper-class of every city in the Empire, except Egypt. Finally, in A.D. 212, every free man in the Empire was made a citizen.<sup>5</sup>

The number of slaves in Rome in the first century of the Empire is almost unbelievable, having been estimated at 400,000.<sup>6</sup> Pliny the Younger owned at least 500 slaves, whereas the freedman Caelius Isidorus

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<sup>3</sup>W. G. Hardy, The Greek and Roman World, (McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Canada, 1962), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 86.



had 4,116 at the time of his death.<sup>7</sup> The emperors had households of at least 20,000 slaves. The practice of freeing slaves either during the master's lifetime or at the time of his death led to the freedman's class becoming an important element in the population. Originally, a freedman and his sons were only second-class Roman citizens, but the third generation enjoyed complete political rights. Under the Empire, however, short-cuts became common, so that a slave could become a Roman citizen immediately upon his release. Thus, as time passed, the Roman became less of Roman or even Italian descent, there being so many freed slaves and also provincials--Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Egyptians, North Africans, Spaniards, Gauls, and Britons--living within the city. "The Roman empire ended by almost obliterating the stock which founded it."<sup>8</sup>

Rome's large population, occupying a relatively small area, led to the gross overcrowding of dwellings. In the second century, some 50,000 residents lived in houses, while the rest of the population lived in the 46,602 apartment blocks.<sup>9</sup> So crowded together were the buildings, that an acute traffic problem arose which led to a ban on all vehicular traffic during the day, except the carts of the building contractors.<sup>10</sup> This, of course, brought such incessant noise from night traffic, that many Romans were "condemned to everlasting insomnia."<sup>11</sup> A picture of the intolerable conditions met with in the crowded streets during the day is presented by Juvenal.<sup>12</sup> The herd of people which sweeps the poet along

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Carcopino, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Juvenal Satires iii. 236 ff., trans. G. Ramsay (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1930).





proceeds on foot through a constantly renewing tussle. The crowd ahead impedes his hasty progress, the crowd behind threatens to crush him. One man jostles him with his elbow, another with a beam he is carrying, and a third bangs his head with a wine cask. A large boot tramps on his foot, his tunic is torn, and then, to his consternation, wagons appear, bearing logs and building-marble. In despair, Juvenal asks, "If the axle breaks and pours its contents on the crowd, what will be left of their bodies?"<sup>13</sup> Such crowded conditions certainly left little room for active games, and helped to shape the pattern of both education and recreation.

The structure of society was another factor which had its part in the production of this pattern, and was as equally important in doing so, as the physical conditions of life. Archaeological research and literary evidence show that there were extremes of wealth and poverty in Rome. The Emperor was all powerful, and enjoyed a wealth beyond that which any senator could approach. The public treasury was his money box. In hierarchical order below the Emperor were the senators, and then the knights. They were privileged to share in the administration of the Empire, and received preferential treatment before the law. Although Rome, at the time, enjoyed a greatly increased trade and consequent luxury, the common population received little of this wealth, and relied, to some extent, either directly or indirectly upon funds allocated for public assistance. At least one-third and possibly one-half of the population lived on this public charity.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the rich were very

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Carcopino, op. cit., p. 78.



rich indeed, owning luxurious villas as well as extravagantly appointed town houses, and having enormous sums of money to spend on investments and entertainments. The provision by the State of food, amusements, recreations, and amenities for the population was based upon a variety of motives. It is possible that a sense of human charity led to such generosity from some sections of the governing class of the society; it is also possible that the consequences of disappointing public expectation may have been dangerous, and politically disastrous. The provision of facilities for recreation in which large numbers of people could be entertained within small areas, made no small contribution to the problem of maintaining a conciliatory level of contentment among the population. In such conditions, the concept of "spectator sports" found its genesis.

Popular education in Rome achieved very little at the elementary level, and would be considered a failure in comparison with what is expected from schools of today.<sup>15</sup> The children of the aristocracy received a better education from the private tutors hired by their parents, many of whom, however, took such an active interest in their offspring's education as to undertake their instruction personally. In the early days of the Republic, Cato the Censor claimed that he alone had the right to educate his son, and boasted that he had taught the boy to read, write, fence and swim.<sup>16</sup> Pliny<sup>17</sup> writes that in the past, every parent was his

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>16</sup>Plutarch The Parallel Lives, Cato 20., trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919).

<sup>17</sup>Pliny Letters vii. 24., trans. W. Melmoth (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955).





child's teacher. Under the Empire, however, a different set of circumstances prevailed; people of the upper strata of society seemed little inclined towards the educating of their own children, and many placed this instruction in the hands of the pedagogus, a slave who served as tutor, guardian, and servant to the child placed in his care. Instruction in the elementary schools was limited to three subjects, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Schools opened at dawn and continued without a recess until noon.<sup>18</sup> They were often situated under an awning outside a shop, disturbed by all the noises of the street, from which only a screen of cloth separated them. It is apparent, then, that there could be no place for physical education in the curriculum of the Roman school. Although Quintilian, a teacher of oratory, refers to the value of physical exercise for the student, he reserves its function for the training of manly gesture and posture in public speaking.<sup>19</sup>

The next institute of learning after the elementary school was that conducted by the grammaticus. This school was mainly concerned with the teaching of literature, through which the students learned to read with expression, and to study the poet's art, grammar, and style, together with any aspects of geography, astronomy, philosophy and similar subjects which were found in the passages under discussion.<sup>20</sup> The third stage in the scholastic advancement of the young Roman was the school of the rhetor.

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<sup>18</sup>Carcopino, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>19</sup>Quintilian Institutio Oratoria i. 11., trans. H. E. Butler (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1921).

<sup>20</sup>Frank G. Moore, The Roman's World, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 211.



These schools of rhetoric served to prepare the student for entering public life. Public speaking and exercises in logic thus completed the education of the Roman youth. As Roman society grew more sophisticated and the family unit weakened, parents relinquished their personal responsibilities towards their children. In general, however, the school was incapable of duplicating the educational influence held by the patriarch of earlier times.

In the literary world, Romans produced little imaginative work before they came under the influence of the Greeks of southern Italy in the third century B.C. The prose of their laws and their oratory was simple and straightforward, and the only historical records were lists of magistrates, and calendars.<sup>21</sup> Although at first there was a considerable amount of translation into Latin from the Greek forms, feelings of nationalism soon led to the production of Roman themes and the expression of Roman values. Among the writers of the third century B.C., the earliest was Livius Andronicus (ca. 284-204 B.C.), a Greek freedman from Tarentum, who made his living as a teacher in Rome, and who translated the Odyssey. However, the poet regarded by the Romans themselves as the fountainhead of their literature was Ennius (239-169 B.C.), an Italian from the south, who was educated in Greek Tarentum. His Annales, written after he became a Roman citizen, relates the history of Rome from the settlement of Aeneas to the war with Hannibal, and expresses the traditional Roman values of stability, perseverance, and responsibility.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Carl Roebuck, The World of Ancient Times, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 498.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 499





Roman literature, having established itself, now became more voluminous. Of the writers of the Republic, Cicero (106-43 B.C.) was the most prolific. In his writings, he expressed the practical-minded Roman viewpoint in rhetorical and philosophical works which held great significance for the education of his own and subsequent generations. His plea that the family should be of the old Roman type, with strong patriarchal authority and discipline, may be interpreted as evidence of a lack of stability in the society of his day, which is intimated also in the didactic poem De Rerum Natura by Lucretius (ca. 94-55 B.C.).

The Augustan Age was Rome's counterpart to the Classical Period of Greek literature, and is known as "The Golden Age of Latin Literature."<sup>23</sup> Virgil (70-19 B.C.) was the most important Augustan writer, while his epic, the Aeneid, has passed beyond a mere idealization of Rome's history to become a part of the great literature of the world. His account of the funeral games, in Book V, makes interesting and entertaining reading for those who would peruse early writings on physical education. Of the other writers of the period, Horace (65-8 B.C.), Ovid (43 B.C.-A.D. 18), and Livy (59 B.C.-A.D. 17) are the best known, the latter's history of Rome from its origins to 9 B.C., becoming the standard history of the Republic.<sup>24</sup>

The literature of the early Empire mirrors a time when the intellectual traditions of the Graeco-Roman world were beginning to crystalize and fuse together. Consequently, it is not surprising to read in these works, arguments for and against the elements of Greek culture which were making their influence felt in the Roman civilization, as, for

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 584.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 586.





example, the Greek methods of exercise. Juvenal (ca. A.D. 60-130), Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), Pliny (A.D. 61-113), Martial (A.D. 40-104), and Suetonius (A.D. 75-160) all provide vivid material for the social history of their times. Among the historians, Tacitus (A.D. 55-117) was the most original and significant. His chief works, the Annals, which covered the reigns of the Julio-Claudians, and the Histories, an account of the Flavian dynasty, were written under Trajan and Hadrian, at a time when criticism of the previous regimes was both safe and expected. Of value for its history of literature and education is the book on rhetorical method and literary criticism by Quintilian (A.D. 35-100), Institutio Oratoria. It is interesting to read of the importance attached to physical education by this early author.

A writer of significance and influence from the Greek renaissance was Plutarch (A.D. 42-126). He received training in philosophy, and spent the early period of his life teaching in the Greek cities and in Rome. His voluminous work, The Parallel Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans, is a valuable source of historical and social information, while his Moralia, though less well known, presents an interesting miscellany of philosophical essays. Claudius Galen (A.D. 130-200), another Greek writer, though not considered a force in the literary world, wrote several works from a medical point of view which contain material of value to the physical educator. He spent the last half of his life in Rome, where he held the position of Physician to the Imperial Household, and he is regarded as the first of the modern writers on physical education.<sup>25</sup> Although the

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<sup>25</sup>J. G. Dixon et al., Landmarks in the History of Physical Education, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 58.





themes and interests of all these writers are widely divergent, a study of their writings presents not only a fascinating mosaic of the Roman civilization, but permits an insight into the everyday life and occupations of the Roman populace.

The problem of how to spend their leisure hours must have been a very pressing one for the people of Rome. Some Romans were wholly unemployed, but even those who pursued a regular occupation or trade finished work at the sixth or seventh hour.<sup>26</sup> Martial writes of a social parasite's calling at his house before the fifth hour has passed, in an attempt to obtain an invitation to dinner, and yet slaves are already off duty and on their way to the public baths.<sup>27</sup> The Roman hour at the winter solstice was equal to forty-five minutes of today's time, and, at the summer solstice it was equal to seventy-five minutes. This meant that the Roman worked about seven hours a day in summer, and less than six in winter, and was thus able to enjoy leisure time during most of the afternoon. In addition to this, there were a number of days designated as public holidays throughout the year, occasionally supplemented by days granted arbitrarily by the emperor. Carcopino estimates that, in the first century, Rome enjoyed at least one day of holiday for every working day.<sup>28</sup> How the Roman was able to occupy himself through his enjoyment of physical activities during these extensive leisure hours, may be determined by an examination of the literature of the period.

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<sup>26</sup>Carcopino, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>27</sup>Martial Epigrams viii. 67., trans. Walter C. Ker (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927).

<sup>28</sup>Op. cit., p. 227.



## CHAPTER II

### ATTITUDE TO PHYSICAL EXERCISE

The Romans, in spite of their increasing Hellenization, did not adopt fully the Greek principle of a harmonious development of the body. In the early days of Rome, the aim of physical training was to prepare men for war and for life on the land. To strive for bodily beauty and grace was considered to be effeminate. Accordingly, though the exercises of the gymnasium were introduced at Rome, conservative elders regarded them with suspicion, looking upon public nudity as "shame's beginning."<sup>1</sup> Scipio Africanus says<sup>2</sup> the Greek system of exercise is "absurd," yet he was criticized by his officers<sup>3</sup> for his "un-Roman" and "not even soldierly appearance," when he appeared in a gymnasium wearing a Greek mantle and sandals, "giving his attention to books in Greek and physical exercise." Horace scornfully suggests<sup>4</sup> that the Roman army exercises are fatiguing for one used to Greek ways," and elsewhere gives playing with the Greek hoop<sup>5</sup> as one reason for Roman youth's lack of interest in horse riding and

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<sup>1</sup>Cicero Tusculan Disputations iv. 33., trans. J. E. King (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Cicero De Republica iv. 4., trans. Clinton W. Keyes (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928).

<sup>3</sup>Livy xxiv. 19., B. O. Foster (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1952).

<sup>4</sup>Horace Satires ii. 2., trans. H. R. Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932).

<sup>5</sup>Horace Odes iii. 24., trans. C. E. Bennett (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1947).





hunting. "To raise a thirst," is declared by Pliny the Elder<sup>6</sup> as a possible objective for the "foreign" exercises, and he observes that they often accompany bouts of excessive drinking.

Despite such antipathy towards gymnastic exercises, gymnasia were soon being attached to the homes of the wealthy, though more for fashionable ostentation than for physical activity. Cicero<sup>7</sup> is anxious that Atticus should not fail to send back any articles of adornment for his gymnasium, during the latter's tour of Greece.

With such ideas towards more liberal forms of exercise being prevalent during the early days of the Empire, it is not surprising to read that many of the references to exercise at this time concern themselves with either denouncing the Greek system, or upholding the martial system of physical training. Dionysius<sup>8</sup> tells us that the Campus Martius<sup>9</sup> "was the most suitable drill-ground for the youth to perform their exercises in arms." Many of the leaders exhibited a level of physical fitness which served as a fine example for their men to follow. Julius Caesar<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Pliny Natural History xiv. 28. 140., trans. H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1942).

<sup>7</sup>Cicero Letters to Atticus i. 6., trans. E. O. Winstedt (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1912).

<sup>8</sup>Dionysius Roman Antiquities v. 13. 2., trans. Ernest Cary (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1940).

<sup>9</sup>The Campus Martius was a marshy alluvial plain extending north of the Capitol in the bend of the Tiber. It was at first used for military gatherings, but was later turned over to public use. It was here that men took physical exercise, and for this reason Agrippa built the earliest gymnasium in the vicinity.

<sup>10</sup>Suetonius The Lives of the Caesars, Julius 57., trans. J. Rolfe (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1951).



"was highly skilled in arms and horsemanship, and of incredible powers of endurance." When captured by pirates and held for ransom for thirty-eight days, he "shared in their sports and exercises with great unconcern."<sup>11</sup> Cato the Younger<sup>12</sup> "built up his body with vigorous exercise." One has only to read Vegetius<sup>13</sup> in order to discover the level of fitness required of the soldier, and how this was attained. If such methods of training were rigidly adhered to, there can be little surprise at Roman supremacy in warfare, for in the words of Plutarch,<sup>14</sup> "War has no place for a bodily condition produced by an indoor life, and a slenderly built soldier accustomed to military exercises, forces his way through the masses of fleshy athletes."

As Roman minds began to appreciate the more liberal forms of exercise, a drift away from the negative attitudes is apparent in the literature. Philosophers became more interested in the wholesome effects of exercise, and began to explore the dictum of mens sana in corpore sano.<sup>15</sup> Cicero<sup>16</sup> couples the activities of the Campus with the amusements of hunting, as examples of recreation. Elsewhere, he speaks of

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<sup>11</sup>Plutarch The Parallel Lives op. cit., Caesar 2.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Cato the Younger 5. 3.

<sup>13</sup>Vegetius Military Science i., trans. N. Lewis and M. Reinhold in Roman Civilization, (Harper Torchbooks; New York: Harper and Row, 1966). This translation is not yet available in the Loeb Edition.

<sup>14</sup>Plutarch Moralia, The Education of Children 11., trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927).

<sup>15</sup>Juvenal op. cit. x. 356.

<sup>16</sup>Cicero De Officiis i. 29., trans Walter Miller (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1913).





individual differences in physical attributes,<sup>17</sup> thus anticipating Quintilian, and even aligns activities of the palaestra with those of the parade ground for developing "vigorous, manly" gestures in oratory.<sup>18</sup>

Seneca<sup>19</sup> claims that "neither the new system nor the old teaches or nourishes virtue," and that neither horse riding nor wrestling are of value if they do not teach self-control. He adheres to the tenets of Stoicism, advocating its doctrines through image--"Animals whose hoofs are hardened on rough ground can travel any road; but when they are fattened on soft marshy meadows their hoofs are soon worn out."<sup>20</sup> However, he warns against over-exercising, pointing out that no matter how splendid the results may be, man "can never be a match in strength or weight, for a first class bull."<sup>21</sup>

Quintilian's views on physical activities follow those propounded by Cicero, for he is intensely concerned with the "education of the perfect orator."<sup>22</sup> He approves of play for young children but cautions against excess, in that it may lead to idleness.<sup>23</sup> His idea, like that of Cicero's, is that exercise must have a definite purpose, for example, a better delivery in oratory, because activities participated in for their own sake, such as wrestling, "kill the mind by over-attention to

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. i. 30.

<sup>18</sup>Cicero De Oratore iii. 59. 220., trans. H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1942).

<sup>19</sup>Seneca Epistulae Morales lxxxviii. 19., trans. R. M. Gummere (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. li. 10.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. xv. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Op. cit. i. Preface. 9.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. i. 3. 10.



the body."<sup>24</sup> Martial is of similar opinion, and would rather men exercised by working in the vineyards, than by lifting weights in the gymnasium.<sup>25</sup> Pliny<sup>26</sup> claims that the elderly Spurrinna has helped to ward off the effects of old age through regular exercise.

Of all the authors, Galen is the most informative on exercise and its effects on health. In his long work, De Sanitate Tuenda, he offers suggestions on types of exercises, when to exercise, and the value of exercise, even anticipating "modern" ideas of isometric work.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid. i. 11. 15.

<sup>25</sup>Op. cit. xiv. 49.

<sup>26</sup>Letters op. cit. iii. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Galen De Sanitate Tuenda. trans. Robert Montraville Green (Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1951).





## LITERARY REFERENCES

### A. Attitudes to Greek Methods of Exercise.

Varro De Re Rustica ii. 1 ff.<sup>28</sup>

It is not without reason that those great men, our ancestors, put the Romans who lived in the country ahead of those who lived in the city. For as in the country those who live in the villa are lazier than those who are engaged in carrying out work on the land, so they thought that those who settled in town were more indolent than those who dwelt in the country. Hence they so divided the year that they attended to their town affairs only on the ninth days, and dwelt in the country on the remaining seven.<sup>29</sup> So long as they kept up this practice they attained both objects--keeping their lands most productive by cultivation, and themselves enjoying better health and not requiring the citified gymnasia of the Greeks. In these days one such gymnasium is hardly enough, and they do not think they have a real villa unless it rings with many resounding Greek names--places severally called procoetion (ante-room), palaestra (exercise room), apodyterion (dressing room) . . . in these days practically all the heads of families have sneaked within the walls, abandoning the sickle and the plough, and would rather busy their hands in the theatre and in the circus than in the grain fields and the vineyards.

Cicero De Officiis i. 36.<sup>30</sup>

The manners taught in the palaestra,<sup>31</sup> for example, are often rather objectionable. . . . Now dignity of mein is also to be enhanced by a good complexion; the complexion is the result of physical exercise.

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<sup>28</sup>Trans. W. D. Hooper (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1934), p. 307.

<sup>29</sup>According to the Roman method of counting, which included both ends of the series. He is alluding to the market-day, the last day of the eight-day week.

<sup>30</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 133

<sup>31</sup>The Greek palaestra, a public school of wrestling and athletics, adopted by the Romans became a place of exercise where the youths were trained in gestures and attitudes, a nursery of foppish manners. (Translator's note).



Cicero Letters to Atticus i. 6.<sup>32</sup>

If you can come across any articles of vertu for my gymnasium, please don't let them slip.

Cicero Tusculan Disputations iv. 33.<sup>33</sup>

For my part I think this practice had its origin in the Greek gymnasium, where that kind of love-making was free and permitted. Well then did Ennius say:

"Shame's beginning is the stripping of men's bodies openly."

Cicero De Republica iv. 4.<sup>34</sup>

Scipio says, "That a young man should go naked. From such sources are derived what we may call the foundation-stores of modesty! And how absurd their system of exercise for young men in gymnasiums! How far from the vigorous is their system of military training for the ephebi."<sup>35</sup>

Pliny Natural History xiv. 28. 140.<sup>36</sup>

This is the object of the exercises that have been introduced from foreign countries, and of rolling in the mud, and throwing the neck back to show off the muscles of the chest. It is declared that the object of these exercises is merely to raise a thirst.

Plutarch The Roman Question 40.<sup>37</sup>

For the Romans used to be very suspicious of rubbing down with oil, and even today they believe that nothing has been so much to

<sup>32</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 19. articles of vertu--suitable ornaments. Note also, a law mentioned by Quintilian vii. 7. 5. A statue of a woman shall not be set up in a gymnasium. Loeb Ed. III, 145.

<sup>33</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 409. <sup>34</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 235.

<sup>35</sup>ephebi--cadetship, 18-20 year olds. The first year was spent in preliminary physical and military training, the second in the ordinary duties of a soldier.

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. IV, 279.

<sup>37</sup>Moralia op. cit., Loeb Ed. IV, 69.





blame for the enslavement and the effeminacy of the Greeks as their gymnasia and wrestling-schools, which engender much listless idleness and waste of time in their cities, as well as paederasty and the ruin of the bodies of the young men with regulated sleeping, walking, rhythmical movements, and strict diet; by these practices they have unconsciously lapsed from the practice of arms, and have become content to be termed nimble athletes and handsome wrestlers rather than excellent men-at-arms and horsemen. It is hard work, at any rate, when men strip in the open air, to escape these consequences; but those who anoint themselves and care for their bodies in their own houses commit no offence.

Tacitus The Annals xiv. 20.<sup>38</sup>

. . . and that our youth, under the influence of foreign tastes, should degenerate into votaries of the gymnasia, of indolence, and of dishonourable amours.

<sup>38</sup>Trans. John Jackson (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1937), IV, 139.



B. Roman Physical Exercise.Dionysius Roman Antiquities v. 13. 2.<sup>39</sup>

(Campus Martius) This field their ancestors had by a public decree consecrated to Mars as a meadow for horses and the most suitable drill-ground for the youth to perform their exercises in arms.

Cicero De Officiis i. 29.<sup>40</sup>

For nature has not brought us into the world to act as if we were created for play or jest, but rather for earnestness and for some more serious and important pursuits. We may, of course, indulge in sport and jest, but in the same way as we enjoy sleep or other relaxations, and only when we have satisfied the claims of our earnest tasks. . . . Our Campus however, and the amusements of the chase are examples of wholesome recreation.

Cicero De Officiis i. 30.<sup>41</sup>

One's physical comforts and wants, therefore, should be ordered according to the demands of health and strength, not according to the calls of pleasure. And if we will only bear in mind the superiority and dignity of our nature, we shall realize how wrong it is to abandon ourselves to excess and to live in luxury and voluptuousness, and how right it is to live in thrift, self-denial, simplicity, and sobriety.

Cicero De Officiis i. 30.<sup>42</sup>

In the matter of physical endowment there are great differences: some, we see, excel in speed for the race, others in strength for wrestling; so in point of personal appearance, some have stateliness, others comeliness.

Cicero De Oratore iii. 59.<sup>43</sup>

. . . gestures accompanied by vigorous manly throwing out of the chest, borrowed not from the stage and the theatrical profession but from the parade ground or the palaestra.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 41.<sup>40</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 105.<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 109.<sup>42</sup>Ibid.<sup>43</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 177.





Virgil Aeneid ix. 605 ff.<sup>44</sup>

'We are by our birth a hard race. We carry our baby sons down to a river as soon as born and toughen them by the water's icy cold. Our boys go sleepless for their hunting and never do they let the woodlands rest. Their play is wheeling horses on the rein and speeding the pointed arrow from the bow. And our young men work and endure and are trained to privation; constantly they harrow and master the land; or set towns quaking in warfare. At every age we are bruised by iron. To goad our bullocks' backs we use a spear reversed. Old age slows us but it never weakens the vigour of our spirit or alters our strength; we crush the grey hairs under a helm and still enjoy bringing home fresh spoils and living by pillage.'

Plutarch Cato the Younger 5. 3.<sup>45</sup>

He built up his body by vigorous exercise, accustoming himself to endure both heat and snow with uncovered head, and to journey on foot at all seasons, without a vehicle. Those of his friends who went abroad with him used horses, and Cato would often join each of them in turn and converse with him, although he walked and they rode.

Suetonius Julius 57.<sup>46</sup>

He was highly skilled in arms and horsemanship, and of incredible powers of endurance. On the march he headed his army, sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, bareheaded both in the heat of the sun and in the rain. He covered great distances with incredible speed, making a hundred miles a day in a hired carriage and with little baggage, swimming the rivers which barred his path or crossing them on inflated skins, and often arriving before the messengers sent to announce his coming.

Celsus De Medicina i. 1.<sup>47</sup>

A man in health, who is both vigorous and his own master, should

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<sup>44</sup>Trans. H. Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1930), II, 153. Numanus, a Latin, boasts about the physical strength and fitness of his countrymen, before being slain by Ascanius son of Aeneas.

<sup>45</sup>The Parallel Lives op. cit., Loeb Ed. VIII, 249.

<sup>46</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 81.

<sup>47</sup>Trans. W. G. Spencer (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1960), I, 43.





be under no obligatory rules, and have no need, either for a medical attendant, or for a rubber and anointer. His kind of life should afford him variety; he should be now in the country, now in town, and more often about the farm; he should sail, hunt, rest sometimes, but more often take exercise; for whilst inaction weakens the body, work strengthens it; the former brings on premature old age, the latter prolongs youth.

Celsus De Medicina i. 2.<sup>48</sup>

He who has been engaged in the day, whether in domestic or on public affairs, ought to keep some portion of the day for the care of the body. The primary care in this respect is exercise, which should always precede the taking of food; the exercise should be ample in the case of one who has laboured less and digested well; it should be lighter in the case of one who is fatigued and has digested less well.

Useful exercises are: reading aloud, drill, handball, running, walking; but this is not by any means most useful on the level, since walking up and down hill varies the movement of the body, unless indeed the body is thoroughly weak; but it is better to walk in the open air than under cover; better, when the head allows of it, in the sun than in the shade; better under the shade of a wall or of trees than under a roof; better a straight than a winding walk. But the exercise ought to come to an end with sweating, or at any rate lassitude, which should be well this side of fatigue; and sometimes less, sometimes more is to be done. But in these matters, as before, the example of athletes should not be followed, with their fixed rules and immoderate labour. The proper sequel to exercise is: at times an anointing, whether in the sun or before a brazier: at times a bath, which should be in a chamber as lofty, well lighted and spacious as possible. However, neither should be made use of invariably, but one of the two the oftener, in accordance with the constitution. There is need of a short rest afterwards.

Seneca Epistulae Morales xv. 2 ff.<sup>49</sup>

It is indeed foolish, my dear Lucilius, and very unsuitable for a cultivated man, to work hard over developing the muscles and broadening the shoulders and strengthening the lungs. For although your heavy feeding produce good results and your sinews grow solid, you can never be a match, either in strength or weight, for a first class bull.

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Now there are short and simple exercises which tire the body

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 47.

<sup>49</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 97.





rapidly, and so save our time; and time is something of which we ought to keep strict account. These exercises are running, brandishing weights, and jumping,--high-jumping or broad-jumping, or the kind which I may call "the Priest's dance," or, in slighting terms, "the clothes cleaner's jump." Select for practice any one of these, and you will find it plain and easy. But whatever you do, come back soon from body to mind.<sup>50</sup> The mind must be exercised both day and night, for it is nourished by moderate labour; and this form of exercise need not be hampered by cold or hot weather, or even by old age.

Seneca Epistulae Morales li. 10.<sup>51</sup>

Animals whose hoofs are hardened on rough ground can travel any road; but when they are fattened on soft marshy meadows their hoofs are soon worn out. The bravest soldier comes from rock-ribbed regions; but the town-bred and the home-bred are sluggish in action. The hand which turns from the plough to the sword never objects to toil; but your sleek and well-dressed dandy quails at the first cloud of dust. Being trained in a rugged country strengthens the character and fits it for great undertakings.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lxxxviii. 18 f.<sup>52</sup>

I also debar from the liberal studies wrestling and all knowledge that is compounded of oil and mud; otherwise, I should be compelled to admit perfumers also, and cooks, and all others who lend their wits to the service of our pleasures. For what "liberal" element is there in these ravenous takers of emetics, whose bodies are fed to fatness while their minds are thin and dull?

Or do we really believe that the training which they give is "liberal" for the young men of Rome, who used to be taught by our ancestors to stand straight and hurl a spear, to wield a pike, to guide a horse, and to handle weapons? Our ancestors used to teach their children nothing that could be learned while lying down. But neither the new system nor the old teaches or nourishes virtue. For what good does it do us to guide a horse and control his speed with a curb, and then find that our own passions, utterly uncurbed, bolt with us? Or to beat many opponents in wrestling or boxing, and then to find that we ourselves are beaten by anger?

<sup>50</sup> Seneca is here anticipating Juvenal's mens sana in corpore sano, the harmony of development in body and mind.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 341.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 359.





Plutarch The Education of Children 11.<sup>53</sup>

It is not proper, either, to overlook the exercise of the body, but we should send the children to the trainers and cultivate adequately this side of education with all diligence, not merely for the sake of gracefulness of body but also with an eye to strength; for sturdiness of body in childhood is the foundation of a hale old age. Just as in fair weather, then, one ought to prepare for storm, so also in youth one should store up discipline and self-restraint as a provision for old age. But the amount of bodily exercise should be so limited as not to be a drain on the children and make them too tired to study; for, according to Plato, sleep and weariness are the enemies of learning. But why do I introduce this subject here? Just because I am anxious to say that which is of greater importance than all the rest: it is for the contests of war that boys must be practised, by exercising themselves in throwing the javelin, shooting with the bow, and in hunting. . . . War has no place for a bodily condition produced by an indoor life, and a slenderly built soldier accustomed to military exercises forces his way through the masses of fleshy athletes.

Plutarch Advice about Keeping Well 130.<sup>54</sup>

After reading or discussion, before going to walk, one should make use of rubbing with oil in a warm room to render the flesh supple, extending the massage as far as practicable to the inward parts, and gently equalizing the vital spirit and diffusing it into the extremities. Let the limits of the amount of this rubbing be what is agreeable to the senses and not discomforting. For the man who thus composes the inward disquiet and tension in his vital spirit manages the superfluous in his body without discomfort, and if unfavourable weather or some engagement prevent his going to walk, it does not matter, for Nature has received her proper due.

Plutarch Advice about Keeping Well 130.<sup>55</sup>

That breathing gives strength the athletic trainers make clear in telling the athletes to brace themselves against the rubbing and stop their breath meantime, and keep tense the portions of the body that are being kneaded and massaged.

<sup>53</sup>Moralia op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 37.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 259.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 257.





Quintilian Institutio Oratoria i. Preface. 9.<sup>56</sup>

My aim, then, is the education of the perfect orator. The first essential of such a one is that he should be a good man, and consequently we demand of him not merely the possession of exceptional gifts of speech, but of all the excellences of character as well.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria i. 3. 10 ff.<sup>57</sup>

I approve of play in the young; it is the sign of a lively disposition; nor will you ever lead me to believe that a boy who is gloomy and in a continual state of depression is ever likely to show alertness of mind in his work, lacking as he does the impulse most natural to boys of his age. Such relaxation however must not be unlimited: otherwise the refusal to give a holiday will make boys hate their work, while excessive indulgence will accustom them to idleness. There are moreover certain games which have an educational value for boys, as for instance when they compete in posing each other with all kinds of questions which they ask turn and turn about. Games too reveal character in the most natural way, at least that is so if the teacher will bear in mind that there is no child so young as to be unable to learn to distinguish between right and wrong, and that the character is best moulded, when it is still guiltless of deceit and most susceptible to instruction: for once a bad habit has become ingrained, it is easier to break than bend.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria v. 10.<sup>58</sup>

. . . . But this does not suffice to make an orator any more than it suffices to learn the art of gymnastics in school: the body must be assisted by continual practice, self control, diet and above all by nature; on the other hand none of these are sufficient in themselves without the aid of art.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria i. 11. 15 f.<sup>59</sup>

I will not blame even those who give a certain amount of time to the teacher of gymnastics. I am not speaking of those, who spend part of their life rubbing themselves with oil and part in wine-bibbing, and kill the mind by over-attention to the body: indeed I would have such as these kept as far as possible from the boy whom we are training. But we give the same name to those who form gesture and motion so that the arms may be extended in the proper manner, and management of the hands

<sup>56</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 9

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 59.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 269

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 189.





free from all trace of rusticity and inelegance, and the attitude becoming, the movements of the feet appropriate and the motions of the head and eyes in keeping with the poise of the body.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria i. 11. 18 f.<sup>60</sup>

We are told that the Spartans even regarded a certain form of dance as a useful element in military training. Nor again did the ancient Romans consider such a practice as disgraceful: this is clear from the fact that priestly and ritual dances have survived to the present day, while Cicero in the third book of his De Oratore quotes the words of Crassus, in which he lays down the principle that the orator "should learn to move his body in a bold and manly fashion derived not from actors or the stage, but from martial and even from gymnastic exercises." And such a method of training has persisted uncensured to our own time. In my opinion, however, such training should not extend beyond the years of boyhood, and even boys should not devote too much time to it. For I do not wish the gestures of oratory to be modelled on those of the dance. But I do desire that such boyish exercises should continue to exert a certain influence, and that something of the grace which we acquired as learners should attend us in after life without our being conscious of the fact.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria viii, Preface. 19.<sup>61</sup>

Healthy bodies, enjoying a good circulation and strengthened by exercise, acquire grace from the same source that gives them strength, for they have a healthy complexion, firm flesh and shapely thews. But, on the other hand, the man who attempts to enhance these physical graces by the use of depilatories and cosmetics succeeds merely in defacing them by the very care which he bestows on them. . . . It is with a more virile spirit that we should pursue eloquence, who, if only her whole body be sound, will never think it her duty to polish her nails and tire her hair.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 49.<sup>62</sup>

Why is strength of arm wasted on the (halteres) silly dumbbells?  
Trenching a vineyard better employs men.

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 191.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. III, 187.

<sup>62</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 457.





Juvenal Satires x. 356.<sup>63</sup>

. . . you should pray for a sound mind in a sound body;<sup>64</sup> for a stout heart that has no fear of death, and deems length of days the least of Nature's gifts; that can endure any kind of toil; that knows neither wrath nor desire, and thinks that the woes and labours of Hercules are better than the loves and the banquets and the down cushions of Saranapalus.<sup>65</sup>

Pliny Letters iii. 1 ff.<sup>66</sup>

The first part of the morning he keeps his bed; at eight he calls for his shoes, and walks three miles, in which he enjoys at once contemplation and exercise. . . .

. . . . When he has thus taken a tour of seven miles, he gets out of his chariot and walks a mile more, after which he either reposes himself, or retires to his study and pen. . . .

When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and summer about two; and if there happens to be no wind, he walks about in the sun. After this he puts himself into prolonged and violent motion at playing ball; for by this sort of exercise, too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself on his couch and waits dinner a little while. . . .

. . . . By this method of living he has preserved his sight and hearing entire, and his body active and vigorous to his 78th year, without discovering any appearance of old age, but the wisdom.

Galen De Sanitate Tuenda i. 8.<sup>67</sup>

There are three principle kinds of exercises, and the same number of differences of motion; for we move either of ourselves, or through others, or by means of drugs. The third kind of motion does not pertain to the healthy. But motion through another occurs in sailing,

<sup>63</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 219.

<sup>64</sup>mens sana in corpore sano

<sup>65</sup>The last king of the Assyrian Empire of Nineveh. A proverb of luxury.

<sup>66</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 181. Pliny is referring to the elderly Spurinna.

<sup>67</sup>Op. cit., p. 25.





riding horseback, driving, and, as was recently said, by means of cradles, swings and arms. For new born infants such motion is not yet necessary as is afforded by vehicles, boats and horses. But to those who have reached the third or fourth year may be permitted a moderate amount of exercise in vehicles and boats. But seven-year old children tolerate even more violent motions, so that they can learn to ride horseback. But children can first move themselves when they begin to creep and even more when they begin to walk. But they should not be compelled prematurely, lest their legs be deformed. And it is clear, even at this age, how much our nature is associated with exercise; for, not even if you shut them up somewhere, could you prevent children from running about and frolicking like colts and calves. For in all animals nature is enough to incite the impulses appropriate for health and safety.

Galen De Sanitate Tuenda ii. 2.<sup>68</sup>

Let us begin with work, considering first whether work and movement and exercise are the same; or whether work and movement are the same, and exercise different; or whether movement is one thing, and work and exercise are the same. To me it does not seem that all movement is exercise, but only when it is vigorous. But since vigour is relative, the same movement may be exercise for one and not for another. The criterion of vigorousness is change of respiration; those movements which do not alter the respiration are not called exercise. But if anyone is compelled by any movement to breathe more or less or faster, that movement becomes exercise for him. This therefore is what is commonly called exercise or gymnastics, from the gymnasium or public place to which the inhabitants of a city come to anoint and rub themselves, to wrestle, throw the discus, or engage in some other sport.

Galen De Sanitate Tuenda ii. 9.<sup>69</sup>

Now it is time to extend our discussion to each of the individual properties of the exercises, showing first that in these also the differences are numerous. For some exercise some one part more than another, and some produce slow movements, and some swift movements, and some vigorously, and some atonically, and in addition to these some violently, and some gently. And I call a vigorous exercise one which exercises forcibly without speed, and a violent exercise one which exercises forcibly with speed; and whether we say violently or robustly will make no difference. Therefore digging is both vigorous and robust, and so too driving four horses at once is sufficiently vigorous exercise, but not swift. And in the same way, if lifting a great weight, one should stand still or should walk a little, or

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 82 ff.





climbing up a slope, these are of this nature. For all the remaining parts of the body are lifted like a burden and sustained by the first organs which move. And so also whoever climbs on a rope, as they train children in a gymnasium, preparing them for vigour.

And likewise, too, whoever, seizing a rope or some high piece of wood, remains hanging from it as long as he can, is exercising regularly and vigorously, but not swiftly; and whoever, stretching out or holding up his two hands, making a fist, and continues as long as possible. And also if, stopping someone, he orders him to pull down his hands, but does not himself yield, he even more is preparing his muscles and sinews for strength. For all such exercises are especially characterized by this, and much more so if anyone, lifting his weight on high with his hands, as on a pulling rope in a gymnasium, holds his hands continually outstretched or raised up,<sup>70</sup> even if you should order someone to pull them down or bend them forcibly, but he holds himself motionless and rigid, not with his hands alone, but with his legs and spine, you would exercise him no little for vigour of the limbs.

Thus they say the well-known Milo exercised himself, sometimes offering himself to anyone who wished to tear and remove him from his seat (but this would be chiefly an exercise of the legs); and sometimes, if he would wish to exercise his hands, ordering them to unclasp his fist. And again, as they say, holding in his hand a pomegranate or other such object, he used to offer it to anyone who wished to take it away. These exercises, therefore, afford not only a display of greatest strength but at the same time practice. And it exercises the vigour of the parts and strengthens them if, seizing someone else in the middle, or being one's self so seized, locking the hands and fingers together, one should order him who is seized to release himself, or should release one's self from the seizer. And so also when, approaching from the side another who bends towards him and throwing one's arms in a circle around his hips, one lifts him like a burden and holds him up and carries him forward; and the more, if one should bend forward and back while carrying him: for thus one would perfectly prepare the whole spine for strength. And thus also those who, placing their chests against one another, forcibly push in opposition; and those who, hanging by their necks, stretch backward, prepare themselves for strength.

But such exercises also, outside the gymnasium in a deep dust, can be done in any trampled place, standing or sitting. But those

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<sup>70</sup>Rachel Sargent Robinson, Sources for the History of Greek Athletics, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Published by author, 1955), offers the following translation of this sentence: "and still more is he developing them if he clasps something heavy with the fingers of each hand (such as the jumping weights of the palaestra) and holds his hands steady, stretched either straight forward or up in the air." p. 178.





who struggle against one another wrestling, practicing their strength, need either deep dust or a gymnasium. This is for this reason: when each wrestler grips with his two legs one leg of his opponent, and then, locking his hands, forcibly pushes on the other's neck, he uses the hand on the gripped leg, and pushes the other hand on his arm. And he might put one hand around the top of his head like a rope, and bend it forcibly backward. For such exercises practice each of the wrestlers for strength; as also do those in which one leg pushes against another, or both against both, for these also prepare both for strength.

There are ten thousand other such robust exercises in the gymnasium, concerning all of which the masseur has experience and use, but he is himself as different from a gymnast as a cook from a physician.

Galen De Sanitate Tuenda ii. 10.<sup>71</sup>

It is time to pass to exercises which are swift, but not vigorous or violent. These are running, shadow-fighting, hand-wrestling, punch-bag, and small-ball both standing and running. Of this sort also are ecplethris and pitulism. Ecplethris is when anyone, running back and forth within the length of a plethrum (100 feet), turning to neither side, shortens the distance a little each time, and ends by coming to a stand at one pace. Pitulism is when anyone moves very quickly backward and forward, going on the tips of his toes and stretching up both hands; and mostly they perform this exercise near a wall, so that, if ever they trip, they can easily straighten themselves up by touching the wall. But when they exercise thus, if there is any concealed error, the exercise becomes weaker.

The movements of this exercise are swift but not violent; and when they do them in the gymnasium, they can run round swiftly in circles, singly or together. And it is permissible to perform a swift exercise either upright or bending and changing position in relation to the next person. And it is possible also to perform a swift exercise with the legs alone, standing in one place, and then to jump, drawing one leg back and advancing the other alternately and quickly, changing legs each time. And it is also possible to perform with the hands a sufficiently swift exercise without using pull-ropes, accelerating their movements in frequency and speed, whether one wishes to make a fist with the hands or merely to spread them out. Thus, then, is swift exercise defined, in the forms which we have mentioned. But it is time to come to violent exercise.

This, as has been said, is combined of vigorous and swift, when to whatever kinds of vigorous exercise have been mentioned, making them as violent as possible, you add swiftness of movement. Not

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 85 f.





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least violent are such exercises as digging, discus-throwing, moving and jumping continuously without stopping. And so also are throwing with any one of the heavy weapons requiring energy, or moving swiftly when clad in heavy armour. And those who exercise with any of these stop shortly from fatigue. And you should now realize the difference between continuous and intermittent exercises. For all the exercises now mentioned are rather carried into effect intermittently, and especially such as are labour and toil, and not merely exercise, such as rowing and ditch-digging. And the gentler exercises are generally performed without pause, such as running and walking.

Galen De Sanitate Tuenda ii. 11.<sup>72</sup>

The gymnast knows the effect of gymnastic movements. If anyone should bid me teach the movements of fighting or any other exercise, or to perform them myself, I should not be able to do whatever one of them it happened to be. But if I were attending anyone practising fighting, I should know exactly what effect each of the functions has, and what part it chiefly exercises. Moreover if the truth must be told, the fighter could tell nothing of their effect. But the man who knows the art of gymnastics, will diagnose them all correctly, referring them to definite objectives. For some are violent, vigorous and strong; or light, swift and forced; or simultaneously violent and swift. These things, then, you will readily know while you see them occurring, and, in addition to these, which functions exercise more the legs, or the hands, or the thorax; which the loins, head, back, or belly; and which every part above others.

For the fighter will perform well the necessary movements, swift, if it so happen, vigorous and strong, but he does not know whether these movements strengthen or weaken him, or whether slow movements add or diminish flesh. And in the same way he will perform vigorous, strong, slow movements, but does not realize that these increase the strength and weight of his body. And so too the charioteer will perform all his necessary functions rhythmically and appropriately, but will be completely ignorant which of them thin or thicken, or improve strength or co-ordination, or make his body soft, hard, thick, or thin. And in the same way the ball-player knows all the throws and catches of the ball, but not what effect each produces in his body.

Vegetius Military Science i.<sup>73</sup>

Twenty miles with the military step should be done in five hours, in the summer only; with the full step, which is quicker, twenty-four

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>73</sup>Cited in Roman Civilization, op. cit., II, 498 f.





miles should be completed in the same number of hours. . . .

The soldier is to be trained in leaping also, to enable him to leap across ditches or overcome some impeding height, so that when difficulties of this nature arise he can cross without effort. Moreover, in actual combat the soldier, advancing with running and leaping, dulls the eyesight of his adversary, strikes terror into his mind, and inflicts a blow before the latter makes definite preparations to avoid it or resist.

. . . . .

Recruits should be obliged frequently to carry burdens weighing up to sixty pounds, and to march with the military step. For on arduous expeditions they find themselves under the necessity of carrying their provisions as well as their arms. . . .

It was a survival of ancient custom, confirmed by the enactments of the deified Augustus and Hadrian, to exercise both cavalry and infantry three times a month by marches. . . . The infantry was instructed to march ten miles with the military step, wearing armour and equipped with all weapons, and return to camp; and to take part of the journey at the quicker pace. The cavalry, likewise, separated in squadrons and similarly armed, performed the same march, practising cavalry exercises, sometimes pursuing, sometimes retreating, and then returning to the attack. They did not make these marches in plains; rather, both branches were compelled to ascend and descend sloping and steep places. . . .

The younger soldiers and recruits used to be drilled morning and afternoon in every type of weapon; the older and experienced ones were drilled in weapons once a day. . . . For length of service or age alone does not bestow the science of war, but after any number of years of service an undisciplined soldier is always a recruit. . . . It is very desirable to drill them also at the post with wooden stakes, as they learn to attack the sides or feet or head both with the point and the edge (of the sword). They should be accustomed also to leap and strike blows at the same time, to rise up with a bound and sink down again below the shield, now eagerly rushing forward with a leap, now leaping back to the rear. They must also practise throwing their javelins at the posts from a distance in order to increase their skill in aiming and the strength of the arm.

The archers and slingers set up twigs as marks, that is, bundles of shoots and straw, at a distance of 600 feet, and aim to hit the mark with arrows or stones hurled from the sling. . . . The slingers should be trained to whirl only once about the head when letting loose a stone. But all soldiers used to be trained to throw stones of a pound weight with the bare hand. . . .

In the winter time, porticoes for the cavalry were covered with





tiles or shingles, or if these were lacking, with reeds, rushes or straw; and there were halls like basilicas for the infantry, in which the army during stormy or windy weather, when the sky was disturbed, were trained in arms under cover. But even on winter days, if the snow or rain stopped, they were obliged to drill in the field, lest the interrupted training weaken the spirit or bodies of the soldiers. They should very frequently cut trees, carry burdens, leap over ditches, swim in the sea or in rivers, march in the full step, and even run with their armour and baggage, so that, inured to daily labour in peace, they may not find this difficult in war. . . .



## CHAPTER III

### THE BATHS

The baths played an important part in Roman life during the Empire, the daily hot bath being a physical relaxation enjoyed by the rich as well as the poor. The latter could use the great baths built especially for the people, whereas many of the former had sumptuous bathing facilities attached to their villas, which reproduced in miniature the basic design of the thermae. These thermae were actually grandiose adaptations of the Greek gymnasium, or palaestra, as described by Vitruvius.<sup>1</sup> Both of these contained a system of baths in conjunction with conveniences for athletic games, and areas for philosophers and rhetoricians, as well as porticoes and vestibules for the idle. It may be said that the thermae began and ended with the Empire.<sup>2</sup> The word itself meant warm springs, or baths of warm water, but came to be applied to the huge establishments built during the Empire, in place of the simpler balneae of the Republic. There were 170 of these balneae throughout the city of Rome in 33 B.C., and 856 in the time of Constantine.<sup>4</sup>

On the Campus Martius, Augustus Agrippa began the construction of the earliest of the great thermae of Rome, with the erection of the

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<sup>1</sup>Vitruvius De Architectura v. 11., trans. F. Granger (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931).

<sup>2</sup>Harper's Dictionary of Classical Antiquity, I, 194.

<sup>3</sup>Pierre Grimal, The Civilization of Rome, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1963), p. 293.

<sup>4</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 158.





Laconian gymnasium<sup>5</sup> in 25 B.C. As the Aqua Virgo, which supplied these baths with water, was not completed until 19 B.C., it is probable that this gymnasium was not used as baths until that time.<sup>6</sup> Elaborate thermae were also constructed by Nero (A.D. 64), Titus (A.D. 81), Domitian (A.D. 95), Trajan (A.D. 98-117), Caracalla (A.D. 216), Alexander Severus (A.D. 228), Decius (A.D. 250), Diocletian (A.D. 305), Constantine (before A.D. 314), and others.<sup>7</sup> These buildings generally followed the Greek prototype but were much more extensive in their exercise areas, as well as their bathing and swimming facilities. "In Italy, the gymnasium constituted a part of the Bath; in Greece, the Bath was looked upon as a part of the gymnasium."<sup>8</sup>

Most baths of the time followed the general pattern of construction as stated by Vitruvius,<sup>9</sup> though some later ones, for example, the Baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, were of such huge proportions as to render some of his ideas impractical. The bather usually progressed through several processes in his bath routine, but the mode of bathing would naturally vary with individual preferences, and also with the facilities available. The apodyterium was the first room entered, this being

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<sup>5</sup>Dio Roman History liii. 27., trans. E. Cary (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1917).

<sup>6</sup>S. B. Platner, A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome, rev. Thomas Ashby (London: Humphrey Milford, 1929), p. 518.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 520 ff.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Cameron, Baths of the Romans, (London: George Scott (printer), 1772), p. 37.

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit. v. 10.



the undressing room with stone benches against the walls, and square holes in the wall at shoulder height to hold the clothes. These holes could not be closed, and stealing was not uncommon. The tepidarium was a warm room or passage which served as a preliminary to the caldarium, a hot air room, where, after perspiring profusely, one could take a warm bath or perhaps a swim. An alternative to the latter room was the laconicum, a circular room heated to a very high temperature and corresponding to the modern Turkish Bath. Fronto scorched his knee on the entrance to one of these hot rooms.<sup>10</sup> Ausonius writes of people "exhausted by the intense heat."<sup>11</sup> Seneca mentions the hot baths and "sweating-rooms" which "drain your strength,"<sup>12</sup> and that "nowadays there is no difference between 'the bath is on fire,' and 'the bath is warm.'"<sup>13</sup>

The bather could return to the apodyterium and take a cold bath in that room, or in the adjoining frigidarium if there was one. Ausonius' exhausted bathers prefer to swim in the Tiber rather than use the cold plunge baths.<sup>14</sup> Pliny's letters indicate that the cold bath was taken first after exercise,<sup>15</sup> while Plutarch says that "to take a cold bath after exercising is ostentatious and juvenile rather than healthful."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Fronto Correspondence, "To Marcus as Caesar," trans. C. R. Haines (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919).

<sup>11</sup> Ausonius The Moselle 337 ff., trans. Hugh Evelyn White (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919).

<sup>12</sup> Epistulae Morales op. cit. li. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. lxxxvi. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ausonius loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Letters op. cit. v. 6.; ii. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Moralia op. cit., Advice about Keeping Well 131. 17.





To these rooms used for bathing were annexed the areas for gymnastics (usually ball games), oiling the body, and the removing of oil and dust with a curved scraper (strigilis) after exercising. There were also large open air swimming baths in the larger establishments. Refreshments were available in the numerous shops inside, or on the perimeter of the buildings. Indeed, the whole complex was akin to a modern community centre. Seneca vividly captures the atmosphere of such an establishment as he complains of the noises emanating therefrom. The exercise with weights, the masseur, the ball-player, the thief, the swimmer, all are presented in a most fascinating manner.<sup>17</sup>

Considering the importance which the baths had in the lives of the people, it is not surprising to read the words of praise devoted to the thermae. Statius<sup>18</sup> writes in glowing terms of the beauties of the baths of Claudius Etruscus, saying that, though one came from Baiae,<sup>19</sup> or even if one had bathed in Nero's baths, one would not scorn their loveliness. Martial<sup>20</sup> agrees, telling Oppianus that he will die "unbathed" if he does not try the warm waters of Etruscus. The baths of Caracalla are named among the marvels of Rome.<sup>21</sup> Yet, despite all this grandeur, without modern methods of filtration, we probably have a truer picture of bathing conditions in the words of Marcus Antoninus: "oil, sweat, filth, greasy water, everything revolting."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. lvi. 1 ff.

<sup>18</sup>Statius Silvae i. 5., trans. J. H. Mozley (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928).

<sup>19</sup>A popular seaside resort south of Rome, with thermae also.

<sup>20</sup>Op. cit. vi. 42.

<sup>21</sup>Platner and Ashby, op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>22</sup>Marcus Aurelius Antoninus viii. 24., trans. C. R. Haines (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1930).



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Dio Roman History lviii. 27.<sup>23</sup>

(25 B.C.) Agrippa next constructed the Laconian sudatorium. He gave the name "Laconian" to the gymnasium because the Lacedaemonians had a greater reputation at that time than anybody else for stripping and exercising after anointing themselves with oil.

Seneca Epistulae Morales li. 7.<sup>24</sup>

What have I to do with those hot baths or with the sweating-room where they shut in the dry steam which is to drain your strength? Perspiration should flow only after toil. Suppose we do what Hannibal did,--check the course of events, give up the war, and give over our bodies to be coddled. Everyone would rightly blame us for our untimely sloth, a thing fraught with peril even for the victor, to say nothing of the one who is only on the way to victory.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lvi. 1 ff.<sup>25</sup>

Beshrew me if I think anything more requisite than silence for a man who secludes himself in order to study! Imagine what a variety of noises reverberates about my ears! I have lodgings right over a bathing establishment. So picture to yourself the assortment of sounds, which are strong enough to make me hate my very powers of hearing! When your strenuous gentleman, for example, is exercising himself by flourishing leaden weights; when he is working hard, or else pretends to be working hard, I can hear him grunt; and whenever he releases his imprisoned breath, I can hear him panting in wheezy and high-pitched tones. Or perhaps I notice some lazy fellow, content with a cheap rub-down, and hear the crack of the pummeling hand on his shoulder, varying in sound according as the hand is laid on flat or hollow. Then perhaps a professional<sup>26</sup> comes along, shouting out the score; that is the finishing touch. Add to this the arresting of an occasional roisterer or pick-pocket, the racket of the man who always likes to hear his own voice in the bathroom, or the enthusiast who plunges into the swimming-tank with unconscionable noise and splashing. Besides all those whose voices, if nothing else are

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<sup>23</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. VI, 263.

<sup>24</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 339.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 373.

<sup>26</sup>pilicrepus--probably a professional ball-player, here recording the score for the game of trigon.





good, imagine the hair-plucker with his penetrating shrill voice,--for purposes of advertisement,--continually giving it vent and never holding his tongue except when he is plucking the armpits and making his victim yell instead. Then the cake-seller with his varied cries, the sausageman, the confectioner, and all the vendors of food hawking their wares, each with his own distinctive intonation.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lxxxvi. 4 ff.<sup>27</sup>

I have inspected the house, which is constructed of hewn stone; the wall which encloses a forest; the towers also, buttressed out on both sides for the purpose of defending the house; the well, concealed among buildings and shrubbery, large enough to keep a whole army supplied; and the small bath, buried in darkness according to the old style, for our ancestors did not think that one could have a hot bath except in darkness. So it was therefore a great pleasure to me to contrast Scipio's ways with our own. Think, in this tiny recess the "terror of Carthage," to whom Rome should offer thanks because she was not captured more than once, used to bathe a body weary with work in the fields! For he was accustomed to keep himself busy and to cultivate the soil with his own hands, as the good old Romans were wont to do. Beneath this dingy roof he stood; and this floor, mean as it is, bore his weight.

But who in these days could bear to bathe in such a fashion? We think ourselves poor and mean if our walls are not resplendent with large and costly mirrors; if our marbles from Alexandria are not set off by mosaics of Numidian stone,<sup>28</sup> if their borders are not faced over on all sides with difficult patterns, arranged in many colours like paintings; if our vaulted ceilings are not buried in glass; if our swimming-pools are not lined with Thasian marble,<sup>29</sup> once a rare and wonderful sight in any temple--pools into which we let down our bodies after they have been drained weak by abundant perspiration; and finally, if the water has not poured from silver spigots. I have so far been speaking of the ordinary bathing establishments; what shall I say when I come to those of the freedmen? What a vast number of statues, of columns that support nothing, but are built for decoration, merely in order to spend money! And what masses of water that fall crashing from level to level! We have

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<sup>27</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 313. Seneca is resting at a country-house which once belonged to Scipio Africanus.

<sup>28</sup>This stone has red and yellow tints predominating.

<sup>29</sup>A white variety from Thasos, an island off the Thracian coast.





become so luxurious that we have nothing but precious stones to walk on.

In this bath of Scipio's there are tiny chinks--you cannot call them windows--cut out of the stone wall in such a way as to admit light without weakening the fortifications; nowadays, however, people regard baths fit only for moths, if they have not been so arranged that they receive the sun all day long through the widest of windows, if men cannot bathe and get a coat of tan at the same time, and if they cannot look out from their bath-tubs over stretches of land and sea. So it goes; the establishments which had drawn crowds and had won admiration when they were first opened are avoided and put back in the category of venerable antiques as soon as luxury has worked out some new device, to her own ultimate undoing. In the early days, however, there were few baths, and they were not fitted out with any display. For why should men elaborately fit out that which costs a penny only, and was invented for use, not merely for delight? The bathers of those days did not have water poured over them, nor did it always run fresh as if from a hot spring; and they did not believe that it mattered at all how perfectly pure was the water into which they were to leave their dirt. Ye gods, what a pleasure it is to enter that dark bath, covered with a common sort of roof, knowing that therein your hero Cato, as aedile, or Fabius Maximus, or one of the Cornelii, has warmed the water with his own hands! For this also used to be the duty of the noblest aediles--to enter these places to which the populace resorted, and to demand that they be cleaned and warmed to a heat required by considerations of use and health, not the heat that men have recently made fashionable, as great as a conflagration--so much so, indeed, that a slave condemned for some criminal offence now ought to be bathed alive! It seems to me that nowadays there is no difference between "the bath is on fire," and "the bath is warm."

How some persons nowadays condemn Scipio as a boor because he did not let daylight into his perspiring-room through wide windows, or because he did not roast in the strong sunlight and dawdle about until he could stew in the hot water! "Poor fool!" they say, "he did not know how to live! He did not bathe in filtered water; it was often turbid, and after heavy rains, almost muddy!" But it did not matter much to Scipio if he had to bathe in that way; he went there to wash off sweat, not ointment. And how do you suppose certain persons will answer me? They will say: "I do not envy Scipio; that was truly an exile's life--to put up with baths like those!" Friend, if you were wiser, you would know that Scipio did not bathe every day. It is stated by those who have reported to us the old-time ways of Rome that the Romans washed only their arms and legs daily--because those were the members which gathered dirt in their daily toil--and bathed all over only once a week. Here someone will retort: "Yes; pretty dirty fellows they evidently were! How they must have smelled!" But





they smelled of the camp, the farm, and heroism. Now that spic-and-span bathing establishments have been devised, men are really fouler than of yore.

Petronius Satyricon 73.<sup>30</sup>

Other guests joined hands and ran round the edge of the bath, roaring with obstreperous laughter at the top of their voices. Some again had their hands tied behind their backs and tried to pick up rings from the floor, or knelt down and bent their heads backwards and tried to touch the tips of their toes.

Martial Epigrams vi. 42.<sup>31</sup>

If you do not bathe in the warm waters of Etruscus,<sup>32</sup> you will die unbathed Oppianus. No other waters will so allure you, not even the springs of Aponus unknown to women; not mild Sinuessa, and the waves of steaming Passer, or towering Anxur; not the waters of Phoebus, and peerless Baiae. Nowhere is the sunlit sheen so cloudless; the very light is longer there, and from no spot does day withdraw so lingeringly. There the quarries of Taygetus<sup>33</sup> are green, and in varied beauty vie the rocks which the Phrygian and Libyan<sup>34</sup> has more deeply hewn. The rich alabaster pants with dry heat, and snake stone is warm with a subtle fire. If Lacedaemonian methods<sup>35</sup> please you, you can content yourself with dry warmth, and then plunge in the natural stream of the Virgin or of Marcia, which glistens so bright and clear that you would not suspect any water there, but would fancy the Lygdian marble shines empty.

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<sup>30</sup>Trans. Michael Heseltine (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1930), p. 145. Petronius here records some physical exercises performed by the guests of Trimalchio in the latter's private baths.

<sup>31</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 383.

<sup>32</sup>Thermae Etrusci, the baths of Claudius Etruscus, supplied with water by both the Aqua Virgo and Marcia.

<sup>33</sup>Green Laconian marble.

<sup>34</sup>Synnadie and Numidian marble, one streaked with purple, the other yellow.

<sup>35</sup>A hot-air bath, as in the laconicum, followed by a cold plunge-bath or swim.



Martial Epigrams xiv. 51.<sup>36</sup>

Strigiles (Skin-scrapers)

Pergamus sent these; scrape yourself with the curved blade: the laundryman will not so often wear out your towels.

Plutarch Advice about Keeping Well 131. 17.<sup>37</sup>

To take a cold bath after exercising is ostentatious and juvenile rather than healthful. For the power of resistance to external influences and the hardiness which it seems to create in the body really produces a more evil effect on the inward parts by stopping up the pores, causing the fluids to collect together, and condensing the exudations which are always wanting to be released and dispersed. Besides, those who insist on taking cold baths have to make a further change into that exact and strictly ordered way of living which we are trying to avoid, and they have to be always taking heed not to transgress this, since every shortcoming is at once bitterly brought to book. On the other hand, warm baths have much to offer by way of excuse. For they do not detract so much from vigour and strength as they help towards health by rendering the food yielding and soft for the digestion, and by providing for the painless dispersion of whatever escapes digestion, at least if it do not remain altogether crude and high up, and soothing any latent feelings of fatigue. However, when Nature affords us a moderate and comfortable condition in our body, the bath had better be left alone. A gentle rubbing with oil beside a fire is better, if the body require warming, for it can take for itself the requisite amount of such warmth; but the sun permits the use of its warmth at neither higher nor lower temperature than is determined by the temperature of the air.

Juvenal Satires xi. 205.<sup>38</sup>

. . . but let my shrivelled skin drink in the vernal sun, and escape the toga. You may go at once to your bath with no shame on your brow, though it wants a whole hour of mid-day.<sup>39</sup> That you could not do for five days continuously, since such a life has weariness. It is rarity that gives zest to pleasure.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 459. The strigil was a curved scraper used for removing perspiration, oil, and dirt after exercise.

<sup>37</sup>Moralia Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 261.

<sup>38</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 235.

<sup>39</sup>The bath was usually not taken until the eighth hour which, in summer, was approximately 2.30 p.m., and in winter, 1.30 p.m.





Pliny Letters ii. 17.<sup>40</sup>

From thence you enter into the grand and spacious cooling-room belonging to the baths, from the opposite walls of which two basins curve outwards as though the wall were pressed into half-hoops; these are fully large enough, if you consider that the sea is close by. Contiguous to this is the anointing room, the furnace adjoining, and boiler-room; then come the two other little bathing-rooms, which are fitted up in an elegant rather than a costly manner: annexed to this is a warm bath of extraordinary workmanship wherein one may swim, and have a prospect at the same time of the sea. Not far from hence stands the tennis-court<sup>41</sup> which lies open to the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Pliny Letters ii. 17.<sup>42</sup>

. . . . Every other convenience of life may be had from Ostia:<sup>43</sup> to a moderate man, indeed, even the next village (between which and my house there is only one villa) would furnish all common necessities. In that little place there is no less than three public baths; which is a great convenience if one happens to arrive home unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time for preparing my own.<sup>44</sup>

Pliny Letters v. 6.<sup>45</sup>

This room is extremely warm in winter, being much exposed to the sun, and in a cloudy day the hot air from an adjoining stove very well supplies his absence. From hence you pass through a spacious and pleasant undressing-room into the cold-bathroom in which is a large gloomy bath: but if you are disposed to swim more at large, or in warmer water, there is a pool for that purpose in the court, and

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<sup>40</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 157. This is a description of the baths at Pliny's villa at Laurentum.

<sup>41</sup>sphaeristerium—literally, a place for playing ball. "Tennis-court" is a very free interpretation by the translator.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed., I, 163.

<sup>43</sup>Situated near the mouth of the Tiber.

<sup>44</sup>That is, for heating the water.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 385. Pliny describes the baths attached to his villa at Tuscany.



near it a reservoir from whence you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again, if you perceive that you are too much relaxed by the warm. Contiguous to the cold-bath is the tepid one, which enjoys the kindly warmth of the sun, but not so intently as that of the hot-bath, which projects from the house. This last consists of three divisions, each of different degrees of heat; the two former lie open to the full sun, the latter, though not so much exposed to its heat, receives an equal share of its light.

Over the undressing-room is built the ball court, which is large enough to admit of several different kinds of games being played at once, each with its own circle of spectators.

Fronto Correspondence, "To Marcus as Caesar," A.D. 155.<sup>46</sup>

While my attendants were carrying me here as usual from the baths in a sedan-chair, they dashed me somewhat carelessly against the scorching entrance to the bath. So my knee was both scraped and scorched.

Fronto Correspondence, "To Appian."<sup>47</sup>

So also porticoes and groves and altars and gymnasia, and baths, if public ones, are thrown open free to all, but if private, are kept under strong lock and key with a doorkeeper to boot, and a fee is extracted from the bathers.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus viii. 24.<sup>48</sup>

What bathing is when thou thinkest of it---oil, sweat, filth, greasy water, everything revolting---such is every part of life and every object we meet with.

Ausonius The Moselle 337 ff.<sup>49</sup>

What of their baths, contrived low down on the verge of the bank, which smoke when Vulcan, drawn by the glowing flue, pants forth his flames and whirls them up through the channelled walls, rolling in masses the imprisoned smoke before the scorching blast! I myself have seen some, exhausted by the intense heat of the baths, scorn the pools and cold plunge-baths, preferring to enjoy running water, and, straightway refreshed by the river, buffet the cool stream, threshing it with their strokes.

<sup>46</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 247.

<sup>48</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 209.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 271.

<sup>49</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 251.





## On the Palaestra

Although the building of the palaestra is not a usual thing in Italy, the method of construction has been handed down. It seems good to explain it and show how the palaestra is planned among the Greeks. Square or oblong cloisters are to be made with a walk around them of two furlongs (this walk the Greeks call diaulos). Three of the sides are to be single colonnades; the fourth which has a south aspect is to be double, so that when rain is accompanied by gales, the drops may not reach the inside. On the other three sides spacious exhedrae (apsidal recesses) are to be planned with seats where philosophers, teachers of rhetoric and other studious persons can sit and discuss. In the double colonnade, however, these provisions are to be made. In the centre there is to be the ephebeum (a large apsidal recess with seats for young men) a third longer than it is wide; on the right side the coryceum (for exercise with the quintain); next to this the conisterium (for athletes to powder themselves); adjoining the conisterium at the angle of the colonnade, the cold bath which the Greeks call lutron; at the left of the ephebeum, the elaethesium (for athletes to oil themselves); next to this is the cold room from which the furnace-room is entered at the angle of the colonnade. Adjoining this on the inside in line with the cold room, a vaulted sweating-room is to be placed, twice as long as it is broad, having in the angle of the colonnade the Laconicum (domed sweating-room) constructed as before described, and opposite this a warm bath. In the palaestra, the cloisters ought to be thus completed and arranged; Outside the palaestra three colonnades are to be arranged; the first as you go out of the peristyle; right and left of this, two colonnades with running tracks. Of these three, the one which has a north aspect, is to be built double and very wide; the others are to be single. On the sides which adjoin the walls and those which adjoin the columns, they are to have borders ten feet wide to serve as paths. The middle part is to be excavated with steps down from the paths to the level track a foot and a half below, and the track is to be not less than twelve feet wide. So persons who walk about on the paths in their clothes will not be disturbed by the athletes who use oil. Such a colonnade is called xystos by the Greeks, whose athletes take exercise in winter on covered tracks. Next to the covered track and double colonnade, walks in the open are to be planned (which the Greeks call paradromides and our people xysta). When it is fine weather in winter, the athletes come into the open and take exercise here. The xysta ought to be so laid out that there are plantations or groves of plane

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<sup>50</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 307. This description of the Greek style of gymnasium with small bathing facilities attached offers a contrast to the more sumptuous bathing facilities of the Romans.





trees between the two colonnades. Here walks are to be made among the trees with spaces paved with cement. Behind the xystum, the stadium (sports ground) should be so planned that large crowds can comfortably see the competitors.

Vitruvius De Architectura v. 10.<sup>51</sup>

#### On Baths

Firstly a site must be chosen as warm as possible, that is, turned away from the north and east. Now the hot and tepid baths are to be lighted from the winter west; but if the nature of the site prevents, at any rate from the south. For the time of bathing is fixed between midday and evening. We must also take care that the hot baths for men and for women are adjacent and planned with the same aspects. For in this way it will follow that the same furnace and heating system will serve for both baths and for their fittings. Three bronze tanks are to be placed above the furnace: one for the hot bath, a second for the tepid bath, a third for the cold bath.<sup>52</sup> They are to be so arranged that the hot water that flows from the tepid bath into the hot bath, may be replaced by a like amount of water flowing down from the cold into the tepid bath. The vaulted chambers which contain the basins, are to be heated from the common furnace. The hanging floors of the hot baths are to be made as follows: first the ground is to be paved with eighteen inch tiles sloping towards the furnace, so that when a ball is thrown in, it does not rest within, but comes back to the furnace room of it-self. Thus the flame will more easily spread under the floor. On this pavement, piers of eight inch bricks are to be built at such intervals that two foot tiles can be placed above. The piers are to be two feet high. They are to be laid in clay worked up with hair, and upon them two foot tiles are to be placed to take the pavement. The vaulted ceilings will be more convenient if they are made of concrete. But if they are of timber, they should be tiled underneath in the following fashion. Iron bars or arches are to be made and hung on the timber close together with iron hooks. And these rods or arches are to be placed so far apart that the tiles without raised edges may rest upon, and be carried by them; thus the whole vaulting is finished resting upon iron. Of these vaulted ceilings the upper joints are to be stopped with clay and hair kneaded together. The underside, which looks to the pavement below, is to be first plastered with potsherds and lime pounded together, and then finished with stucco or fine plaster.

Such vaulting over hot baths will be made more convenient if it

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 303.

<sup>52</sup> These rules are followed in the Stabian Baths at Pompeii.



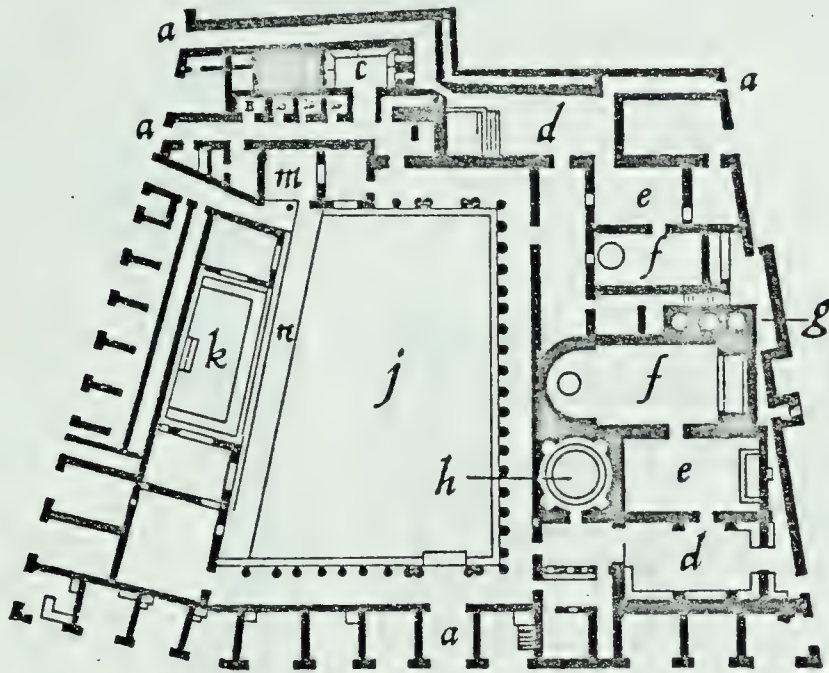


is double. For the moisture from the heat cannot attack the wood of the timbering but will be dispersed between the two vaults. Now the size of the baths is to be proportioned to the number of persons, and it is to be thus arranged. Apart from the apse containing the bathing tub and the basin in which it stands, the breadth is to be two-thirds the length. The bathing tub should be placed under the light so that the bystanders do not obscure the light with their shadows. The apses for the bathing tubs should be spacious so that when the first-comers have taken their places, the others waiting their turn may stand conveniently. Now the width of the basin between the wall and the parapet, should be not less than six feet, from which the lower step and the "cushion" are to take two feet. The domed sweating chamber should adjoin the tepid bath. The height to the springing of the dome should be equal to the width. In the middle of the dome a light is to be left. From this a bronze tray is hung with chains; by the raising and lowering of the tray from the opening, the sweating is adjusted. The tray should be circular, so that the force of the flame and the heat may be diffused equally from the centre over the rounded curve.



## DIAGRAMS OF BATHS

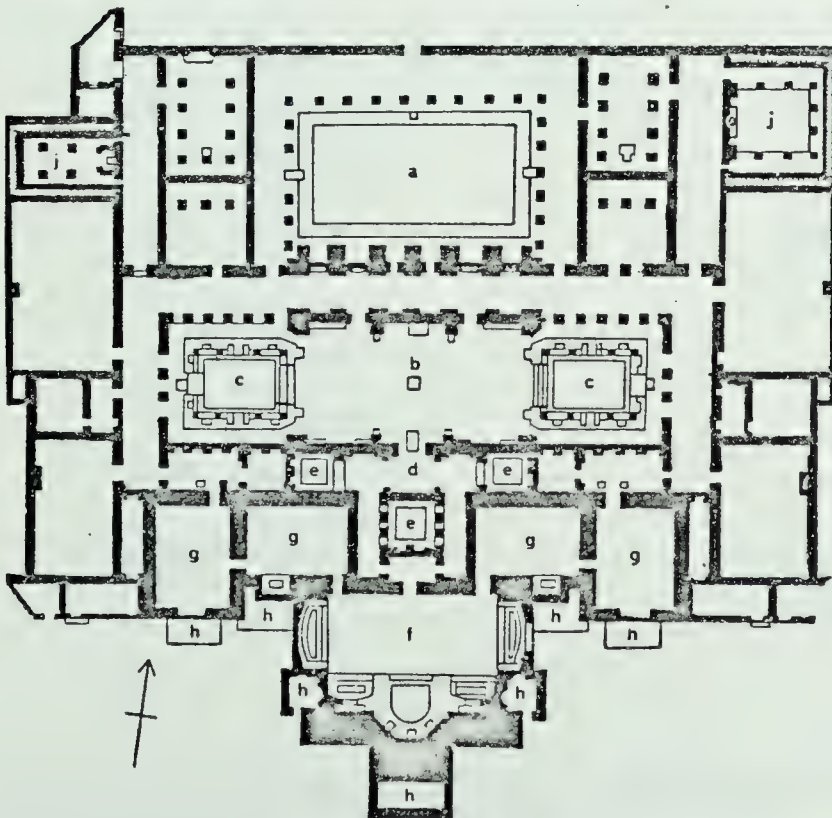
Stabian Baths, Pompeii.



- d. Changing room.
- e. Tepidarium.
- f. Caldarium.
- g. Heating plant.
- h. Frigidarium.
- j. Palaestra.
- k. Swimming pool.
- m. Room where stone balls were found, opening onto n.
- n. A paved alley.

0 10 20 m

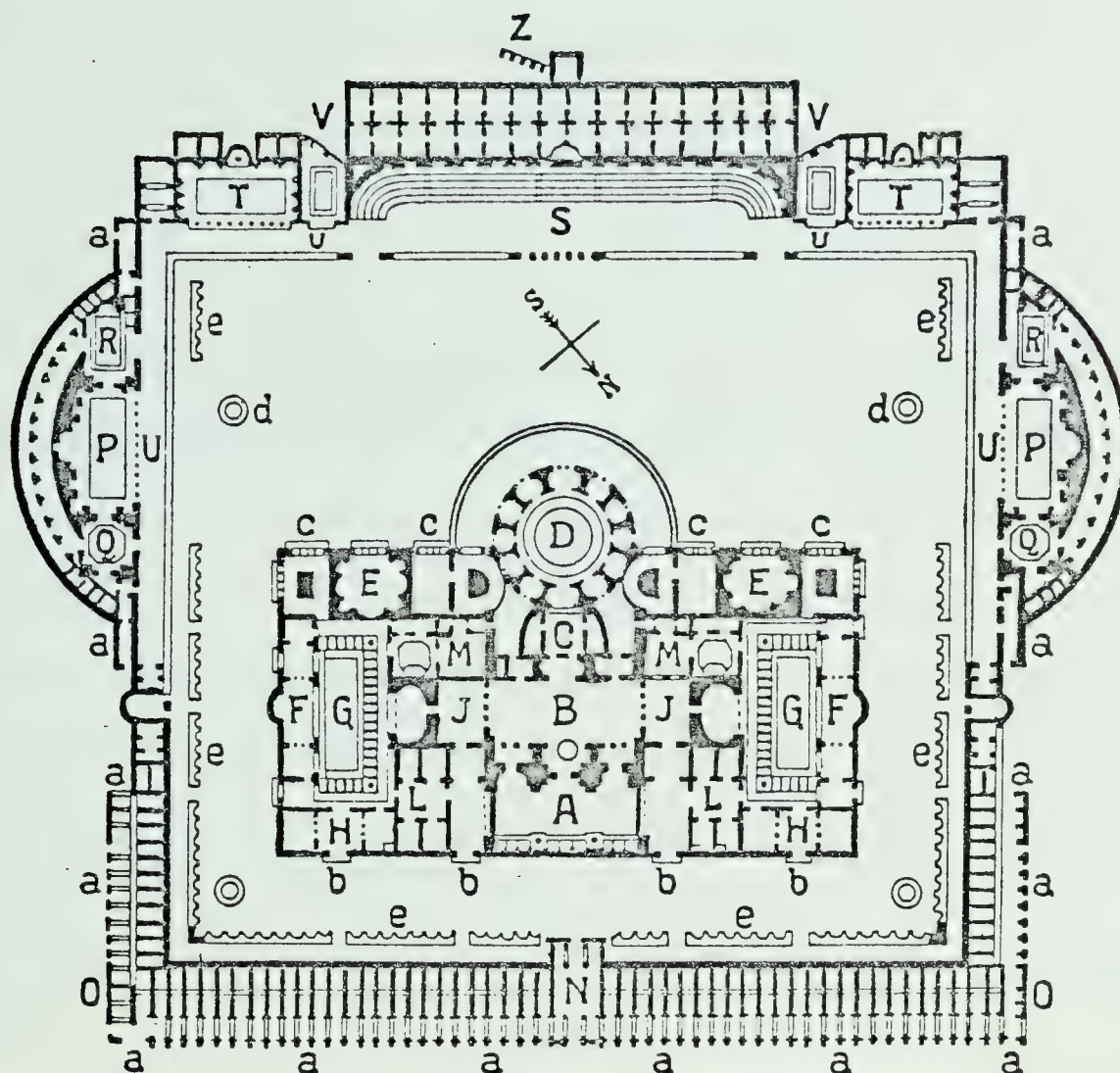
Hadrian's Baths, Leptis Magna.



- a. Open-air swimming pool.
- b. Frigidarium.
- c. Plunge-baths.
- d. Tepidarium.
- e. Smaller baths.
- f. Caldarium.
- g. High-temperature rooms.
- h. Furnaces.







### BATHS OF CARACALLA

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Frigidarium (Swimming Pool) | QQ. Nymphaea                     |
| B. Great Hall                  | RR. Study Rooms                  |
| C. Nymphaeum                   | S. Steps to Portico              |
| D. Calidarium                  | TT. Libraries                    |
| EE. Lounges                    | UU. Promenades                   |
| FF. Lecture Halls              | VV. Cisterns                     |
| GG. Palaestra                  | Z. Aqueduct and Reservoir        |
| HH. Vestibules                 |                                  |
| JJ. Courts                     |                                  |
| LL. Dressing Rooms             | aa. Façade of External Enclosure |
| MM. Steam Baths                | bb. Entrance to the Baths        |
| N. Main Entrance               | cc. Game and Sport Rooms         |
| OO. Shops                      | dd. Fountains                    |
| PP. Gymnasia                   | ee. Podia of Colonnades          |

From George M. Hanfmann, *Roman Art* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1964), p. 152.



## PLATE I

## THE BATHS OF CARACALLA

Figure 1.

A reconstruction of the Baths by C. V. Rauscher (1894), representing the inner right-hand section of the diagram on p. 48. The building is seen opened, with the swimming pool (A, upper left), the round tower of the hot bath (D), the dressing rooms (L), and the palaestra (G). Around the colonnaded palaestra is seen one of the galleries of the second floor which afforded facilities for sun-bathing.

Source: G. M. A. Hanfmann, Roman Art, (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1964), p. 153.

Figure 2.

An aerial view of the ruins. The reconstruction in Figure 1 is taken from the left-hand portion of this photograph.

Source: Ibid.







Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## CHAPTER IV

### BALL GAMES

In ancient Rome, ball playing was not a major sport in the same sense as were the gladiatorial contests or the chariot-races, yet it enjoyed a wide popularity both as a means of exercise and as a competitive sport. There are many literary references to the fact that ball games were played, but the information about the balls and the games themselves is incomplete. It is clear that this activity was popular in the afternoon just prior to the daily bath, so that after the players were perspiring freely, they could immediately enter the bath chambers, or perhaps swim in one of the waterways of Rome, such as the Aqua Virgo.<sup>1</sup> In his descriptions of his villas at Laurentum and in the Tuscan hills, the younger Pliny<sup>2</sup> mentions the ball court, sphaeristerium, as being close to the baths. Seneca<sup>3</sup> who once had lodgings right above one of the public baths in Rome, complains of the noise emanating therefrom, including the shouting of a ball-player, pili crepus, as he loudly counts the score. Trimalchio played ball just before his bath,<sup>4</sup> as did the elderly Spurinna, who, despite his seventy-seven years, took violent and prolonged exercise with the ball prior to his bath and dinner.<sup>5</sup> Martial<sup>6</sup> gives praise to the young scholar Atticus, who prefers to run rather than join in the

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<sup>1</sup>Martial op. cit. vii. 32.; xiv. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Letters op. cit. v. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. lvi. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Petronius op. cit. 27.

<sup>5</sup>Pliny Letters op. cit. iii. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Op. cit. vii. 32.





ball games and wrestling prior to the bath.

The Campus Martius was a popular area for ball play.<sup>7</sup> Cato the younger so easily bore a political defeat in an election for consulship that he anointed himself and went to the Campus Martius to practise ball.<sup>8</sup> Several of the more prominent figures in public life and in the literary field displayed interest in ball play. Caesar and Anthony often devoted themselves to a game of ball, "and Anthony always retired from the field defeated."<sup>9</sup> Stopping at Capua on the journey to Brundisium, Maecenas "goes off to ball playing" while Virgil and Horace sleep, for "such play is hard on the sore-eyed and dyspeptic."<sup>10</sup> Augustus took to ball games immediately after the civil war.<sup>11</sup> Sidonius recalls ball games amongst his youthful sports.<sup>12</sup> To Lupus, he writes that Lampridus "played ball solely for pleasure."<sup>13</sup>

Literary and political references give evidence of the place which ball games held in society. Fronto uses such a reference in explaining the difficulty of making a response to an expensive gift.<sup>14</sup> He claims the giving of such a gift is akin to sending a fellow ball player "too heavy a return." Seneca, though often scornful of devotion to

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<sup>7</sup>Strabo Geography v. 3. 8., trans. Horace L. Jones (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1923). Compare also, Horace Satires op. cit. i. 6.; Horace Ars Poetica 380., trans. H. R. Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1932).

<sup>8</sup>Plutarch The Parallel Lives op. cit. Cato the Younger 50.

<sup>9</sup>Plutarch Moralia op. cit. The Fortune of the Romans 319.

<sup>10</sup>Horace Satires op. cit. i. 5.      <sup>11</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Augustus 83.

<sup>12</sup>Sidonius Letters iii. 3. 2.; iv. 4. 1., trans. W. B. Anderson (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1965).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Op. cit. "To Arrian."



physical exercise, draws a comparison between the giving of benefits and the throwing of a ball from one player to another.<sup>15</sup> The gift of a warm Spartan cloak, endromis, is praised, for even in December, it will keep out the rain and the cold when one plays ball.<sup>16</sup> A political inscription from Pompeii urges ball players to support one Vettius Fernius for the office of aedile.<sup>17</sup>

It seems only natural to assume that not all were enamoured with the spirit of ball play. Horace lightly suggests the swift ball to those who find Roman army exercises fatiguing.<sup>18</sup> Seneca displays contempt for those who spend their whole life at chess, ball, or sunbaking.<sup>19</sup> However, one has only to read Galen's essay on "Exercise with the Small Ball" to obtain a defence of ball play for recreation and health.<sup>20</sup>

Since there is no indication that the Romans used a bat or racquet of any kind, to propel a ball they either threw it or struck it with the hand. Evidence of the latter is found in a quotation from Varro<sup>21</sup> who refers to boys in the forum at Rome playing ball expulsim in front of the butcher's shop. Martial mentions the names of four balls, alluded to

<sup>15</sup>Seneca Moral Essays, On Benefits 17. 3., trans. John W. Basore (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935).

<sup>16</sup>Martial op. cit. iv. 19.      <sup>17</sup>CIL IV. 1147.

<sup>18</sup>Satires op. cit. ii. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Moral Essays op. cit. On the Shortness of Life 13. 1.

<sup>20</sup>Galen Exercises with the Small Ball, cited in Robinson op. cit. p. 185.

<sup>21</sup>Cited in Nonius Compendiosa Doctrina Pars I (Lipsiae, 1888), p. 145.





in four consecutive couplets which form part of a collection of couplets to be attached to gifts distributed at dinner parties. Successively, he refers to the pila paganica (stuffed with feathers), pila trigonalis (used to play the game of trigon), the follis (balloon or bladder ball), and the harpasta (scrimmage balls).<sup>22</sup> It is not known for certain whether these were the only balls in use, or how many variations of each there may have been.<sup>23</sup>

Pliny states that his sphaeristerium was large enough to allow several different kinds of games to be played at the same time.<sup>24</sup> Games of ball ranged from a simple kind of throw-and-catch played in the street,<sup>25</sup> to the rough and tumble of harpastum.<sup>26</sup> Once again however, accurate information on methods of play is not available. The most common game found in the literature is trigon, the game of three.<sup>27</sup> In this game, three players apparently stood at the corners of a triangle and each propelled several balls around in such a manner as to cause the other

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<sup>22</sup>Op. cit. xiv. 45 ff.

<sup>23</sup>Woody cites Becker as stating that there were only three types of balls, the pila, the small ball varying in hardness for different kinds of games; the follis, a large inflated balloon ball; and the paganica. He offers Marquardt's opinion that there were as many as five different balls varying in size and content. Thomas Woody, Life and Education in Early Societies, (New York: Macmillan Coy., 1949), p. 667.

<sup>24</sup>Letters op. cit. v. 6.

<sup>25</sup>Plautus Curculio 296., trans. Paul Nixon (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938).

<sup>26</sup>Sidonius op. cit. v. 17. See also G. E. Marindin, "The Game of Harpastum or Pheninda," Classical Review, (April, 1890), 145 ff.

<sup>27</sup>Isidore Etymologiarium sive originum xviii. 69. 2., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911). "trigonaria est qua inter tres luditur"--trigon is that game which is played with three.



players to drop them, and so obtain a score. Ambidexterity seems to have been a necessary feature, as Martial states that one who does not possess a nimble left hand might just as well give up the ball and not play at all.<sup>28</sup> That it was a strenuous game is affirmed by Horace when he specifically cites trigon as a game which he avoids in the hot afternoon when he is weary.<sup>29</sup>

The most strenuous of all the ball games was harpastum. Martial mentions it specifically by name, and his four references to it<sup>30</sup> indicate that it was a "dusty game" played with a small compact ball, that it required much moving about, and served to develop the neck. It was originally a Greek game, and much of the scant information on methods of play comes from a mixture of Greek and Roman sources. The most detailed description is found in Athenaeus,<sup>31</sup> from whom we learn that at an earlier time it was called phaeninda, and that it was a violent and exhausting game involving much twisting and turning of the neck, passing of the ball from player to player, feinting, dodging, and wrestling for the ball. Marindin claims that both Galen and Sidonius also speak of harpastum.<sup>32</sup> Sidonius, a bishop of Gaul in the fifth century, is certainly describing a vigorous ball game, one in which physical fitness was a definite prerequisite.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Op. cit. xiv. 46.

<sup>29</sup>Satires op. cit. i. 6.

<sup>30</sup>Op. cit. iv. 19. 6.; vii. 32. 10.; vii. 67. 4.; xiv. 48.

<sup>31</sup>Athenaeus Deipnosophists i. 15., trans. Charles B. Gulick (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1940). Also Pollux Onomasticon ix. 105., cited in Robinson op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>32</sup>Op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>33</sup>Op. cit. To Eriphius 5.17.





No reference to the kicking of the ball has been located in any of the translations.<sup>34</sup> While it is not possible from the available evidence to reconstruct in detail a single ball game played by the Romans, there is sufficient information to support the statement that, apart from the activities of the Circus, ball games occupied the attention of the people more than any other outdoor sport.

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<sup>34</sup> Norma Young, in her article "Did the Greeks and the Romans Play Football?" Research Quarterly, XV (December, 1944), p. 310 ff., also notes the lack of mention of kicking, citing Galen as one of her authorities. Two reconstructed Latin texts, however, one from Isidore op. cit. xviii. 69. 2., and the other from Manilius v. 162 ff., cited in W. McDaniel, "Some Passages Concerning Ball Games," TAPA., XXXVIII, (1906), p. 131 f., present possible evidence of the use of the feet in ball-play. Isidore refers to a game called arenata in which the ball may be struck with the extended lower leg--Suram dicitur dare qui pilam crure prolato feriendam consuloribus praebent. The following passage from Manilius is ambiguous:

Ille pilam celeri fugientem reddere planta  
Et pedibus pensare manus et ludere \*fuluo (Cod. F. saltu)

This may be translated literally as: He returns the elusive ball with a swift foot and compensating his hands with his feet plays with their assistance (or by leaping).

McDaniel's interpretation is that this star ball player, prius victor stadio, by fleetness of foot is able to return the ball that is flying apparently beyond his grasp; he proposes that et pedibus pensare manus may then mean that the player helps out his hands, or makes up for their inability to catch the ball (if he does not move), by his agility in running. However, a possible alternate interpretation is that the player actually uses his feet to return a ball which he is unable to send back with his hands, so giving them additional assistance.



## LITERARY REFERENCES

### A. Miscellaneous References to Ball-Play.

Horace Satires i. 5.<sup>35</sup>

Maecenas goes off to ball-playing, Virgil and I to sleep, for such play is hard on the sore-eyed and the dyspeptic.

Horace Satires ii. 2.<sup>36</sup>

After hunting the hare or wearily dismounting from an unbroken horse, or else, if Roman army exercises are fatiguing to one used to Greek ways, it may be the swift ball takes your fancy, where the excitement pleasantly beguiles the hard toil, or it may be the discus (by all means hurl the discus through the yielding air)--well, when toil has knocked the daintiness out of you; when you are thirsty and hungry, despise, if you can, plain food.

Seneca On the Shortness of Life 13. 1.<sup>37</sup>

It would be tedious to mention all the different men who have spent the whole of their life over chess or ball or the practice of baking their bodies in the sun.

Ovid Tristia iii. 12.<sup>38</sup>

In yonder land there is now rest, and the noisy wars of the wordy forum are giving place to festivals one after another; now there is sport with horses, now there is play with light arms, with the ball or the swift circling hoop; now the young men, reeking of slippery oil, are bathing wearied limbs in the Virgin water.

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<sup>35</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 69.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 137. This passage also shows the attitude of the old Romans to Greek methods of exercise.

<sup>37</sup>Moral Essays op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 327.

<sup>38</sup>Trans. A. L. Wheeler (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1924), p. 147. Ovid was exiled by Augustus in A.D. 8 (for an offence which remains unrevealed) to Tomi, near the mouth of the Danube. During the spring, his thoughts turn to the athletic activities at Rome.





Fronto Correspondence, "To Arrian."<sup>39</sup>

He that sends too heavy a gift offends no less than he who sends his fellow ball-player too heavy a return.

Plutarch The Fortune of the Romans 7.<sup>40</sup>

Caesar and Anthony often devoted their leisure to a game of ball or dice or even to fights of pet birds such as quails or cocks: and Anthony always retired from the field defeated.

Suetonius The Deified Augustus 83.<sup>41</sup>

Immediately after the civil war he gave up exercise with horses and arms in the Campus Martius, at first turning to pass-ball and balloon-ball, but soon confining himself to riding or taking a walk, ending the latter by running and leaping, wrapped in a mantle or blanket. To divert his mind he sometimes angled and sometimes played at dice, marbles and nuts with little boys. . .

Martial Epigrams iv. 19.<sup>42</sup>

This shaggy nursling of a weaver on the Seine, a barbarian garb that has a Spartan name, a thing uncouth, but not to be despised in cold December—we send you as a gift, a foreign endromis,<sup>43</sup> whether you rule the sticky ointment (or perhaps: "whether you tread the lists of the oiled wrestler") or catch off the warming handball,<sup>44</sup> or snatch the scrimmage-ball<sup>45</sup> amid the dust, or bandy to and fro the feather weight of the flaccid bladder-ball<sup>46</sup> or strive to outrun in the race the light-footed Athas, that searching cold may not pass into your moist limbs.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 227.

<sup>40</sup>Moralia op. cit., Loeb Ed. IV, 343.

<sup>41</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 250.

<sup>42</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 244.

<sup>43</sup>A rough cloak worn by athletes, male or female, after exercise.

<sup>44</sup>Trigon

<sup>45</sup>Harpastum

<sup>46</sup>Follis



B. Ball-Playing on the Campus and in the Baths.

Strabo Geography v. 3. 8.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, the size of the Campus is remarkable, since it affords space at the same time and without interference, not only for chari races and every other equestrian exercise, but also for all that multitude of people who exercise themselves by ball-playing, hoop trundling, and wrestling. . .

Horace Satires i. 6.<sup>48</sup>

But when I am weary and the fiercer sun has warned me to go to the baths, I shun the Campus and the game of ball.

Horace Ars Poetica 380.<sup>49</sup>

He who cannot play a game, shuns the weapons of the Campus, and, if unskilled in ball or quoit<sup>50</sup> or hoop, remains aloof, lest the crowded circle break out in righteous laughter.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 163.<sup>51</sup>

Give up the ball: the bell of the warm baths is sounding. Do you go on playing? You want to go home after a bath in the Virgin water only.

Martial Epigrams vii. 32.<sup>52</sup>

But other young men the boxing master with his battered ear courts, and the dirty anointer makes off with wealth undeserved.<sup>53</sup> No handball, no bladder-ball, no feather stuffed ball makes you ready for the

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<sup>47</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 407.

<sup>48</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 87.

<sup>49</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 481. The passage indicates that a person not athletically inclined was a subject for ridicule on the Campus.

<sup>50</sup>"quoit" is the translation for discus.

<sup>51</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 497.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 445.

<sup>53</sup>By giving attention to those who were not athletes.





warm bath, nor the blunted stroke upon the unarmed stump,<sup>54</sup> nor do you stretch forth squared arms which are besmeared with sticky ointment, nor, darting to and fro, snatch the dusty scrimmage-ball, but you run only by the clear Virgin water. . . . To trifle in the various sports to which every open space is devoted, when one can run, is sloth.

Pliny Letters v. 6.<sup>55</sup>

Over the undressing-room is built the ball-court, which is large enough to admit of several different kinds of games being played at once, each with its own circle of spectators.

### C. The Names of Some Balls.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 45.<sup>56</sup>

#### Pila Paganica (A Feather-Stuffed Ball)

This ball which swells with the tightly crammed feathers is less flaccid than the bladder-ball and less compact than a handball.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 46.<sup>57</sup>

#### Pila Trigonalis (A Ball for the Three-Cornered Game)

If you know how to bandy me with your nimble left-handers, I am yours. Don't you know how? You clown, give back the ball.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 47.<sup>58</sup>

#### Follis (The Bladder-Ball)

Go far off, you young men, unstrenuous age befits me: with the bladder-ball it becomes boys to play, with the bladder-ball, old men.

<sup>54</sup>The post, palus, on which strokes with a blunted sword were practised. c.f. Juvenal vi. 247, and Vegetius Military Science i. This was also used as an exercise before the bath.

<sup>55</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 387.

<sup>56</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 457. <sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. Though this is a very literal translation it indicates that unstrenuous play with the follis best suited the very young and the old.



Martial Epigrams xiv. 48.<sup>59</sup>

Harpasta (Scrimmage-Balls)

These the dissolute youth, who with empty labour makes big his neck, swiftly catches at on the dusty ground of Anthaeus.

D. Various Methods of Play.

Pisonis Panegyric on Piso 185.<sup>60</sup>

No less is your nimbleness, if mayhap it is your pleasure to return the flying ball or recover it when falling to the ground, and by a surprising movement get it within bounds again in its flight. To watch such play the populace remains stock-still, and the whole crowd, sweating with exertion, suddenly abandons its own games.

Seneca On Benefits 2. 17.<sup>61</sup>

If the ball falls to the ground, it is undoubtedly the fault either of the thrower or the catcher; it maintains its course only so long as it does not escape from the hands of the two players by reason of their skill in catching and throwing it. The good player, however, must of necessity use one method of hurling the ball to a partner who is a long way off, and another to one who is near at hand. The same condition applies to a benefit. Unless this is suited to the character of both, the one who gives and the one who receives, it will neither leave the hands of the one, nor reach the hands of the other, in the proper manner. If we are playing with a practised and skilled partner, we shall be bolder in throwing the ball, for no matter how it comes his ready and quick hand will promptly drive it back; if with an unskilled novice, we shall not throw it with so much tension and so much violence, but play more gently, and run slowly forward guiding the ball into his very hand.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid. Antaeus was a powerful giant of Libya who compelled all strangers to wrestle with him. One such stranger was Hercules, who, finding that each time Antaeus fell to the earth he gained new force, held him aloft and so killed him. The reference here would infer that this scrimmage game involved wrestling for the ball.

<sup>60</sup>Minor Latin Poets, trans. J. Wright Duff and Arnold M. Duff (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935), p. 309.

<sup>61</sup>Moral Essays op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 83.





Petronius Satyricon 27.<sup>62</sup>

We began to take a stroll in evening dress to pass the time, or rather to joke and mix with the groups of players, when all at once we saw a bald old man in a reddish shirt playing at ball with some long-haired boys. It was not the boys that attracted our notice, though they deserved it, but the old gentleman,<sup>63</sup> who was in his house shoes, busily engaged with a green ball. He never picked it up if it touched the ground. A slave stood by with a bagful and supplied them to the players. We also observed a new feature in the game. Two eunuchs were standing at different points in the group. One held a silver jordan, one counted the balls, not as they flew from hand to hand in the rigour of the game, but when they dropped to the ground.

Martial Epigrams vii. 72.<sup>64</sup>

. . . so may the oiled ring's<sup>65</sup> favourable judgment award you victory over the thin-clad handball players, and do not praise more than yours the left-handers of Polybus.

Martial Epigrams xii. 82.<sup>66</sup>

To escape Menogenes in the warm baths and about the baths is impossible, try what artifice you will. He will grab the warm handball with right and left, that he may be able often to score to your account the balls he catches. He picks up and will restore to you the flaccid bladder-ball from the dust, even if he has already bathed, is already in his dinner slippers. . .

Pollux Onomasticon ix. 104 ff.<sup>67</sup>

The various games of ball were called by the names Episkyros, Phaininda, Aporrhaxis, and Urania. Episkyros is called Ephebike

<sup>62</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 39.

<sup>63</sup>Trimalchio, who owned the villa where the game was being played.

<sup>64</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 473.

<sup>65</sup>Other athletes who were watching. <sup>66</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 377.

<sup>67</sup>Cited in Robinson, op. cit., p. 183. Pollux, native of Naucratis, Egypt, was at one time, like Galen, an official on the staff of the Emperor Commodus. It is not known whether all the games that he mentions here were played by the Romans.





(young men's ball) and also Epikyros (crowd ball). It is played in this way: two opposing sides, equal in number, draw a line between them with a stone chip which they call skyros. Depositing the ball on this, each side then draws on both sides a line behind the centre boundary; the side which gets hold of the ball first hurls it over the heads of the other side, whose business it is to intercept the ball in motion and to throw it to the opposite side, until the one side pushes the other beyond the back line.

Phaininda is so named either from Phainidos, its originator, or from phenakizein (to cheat), because the player gestures toward one person but throws the ball at another, thus deceiving the one expecting it. The game with the small ball which is called Harpastum from harpazein (to seize) might very likely resemble Phaininda and someone might call the above the "Game with the Soft Ball."

Apporrhaxis (bounce ball): one must strike the ball smartly down to the ground, then meet its bounce and strike it back with the hand; the number of bounces is counted.

Urania (sky ball): the player bending backwards tosses the ball up toward the sky; each of the other players tries to leap up ahead of the rest and seize it before it falls to the ground, just as Homer seems to indicate was done among the Phaeacians.

When they threw the ball against the wall, however, the number of bounces back was counted. And the person who was defeated was called "donkey" and had to do whatever was dictated. The person winning was called "king" and did the dictating.

Athenaeus Deipnosophists i. 14.<sup>68</sup>

The folliculus, as it was called (it was apparently a kind of ball) was invented by Atticus of Naples, trainer of Pompey the Great, as an aid in physical exercise. The ball-game now called harpastum was formerly phaininda, which is the kind I like best of all.

Great are the exertion and fatigue attendant upon contests of ball playing, and violent twisting and turning of the neck. Hence Antiphanes: "Damn me, what a pain I've got in my neck!" He describes the game of phaininda thus: "He seized the ball and passed it with a laugh to one, while the other player he dodged; from one he pushed it out of the way, while he raised another player to his feet amid resounding shouts of 'over his head,' 'on the ground,' 'up in the air,' 'too short,' 'pass it back in the scrimmage.'" The game was called phaininda either from the players shooting the ball or because, according to Jube the Mauretanian, its inventor was the trainer Phainestius.

<sup>68</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 65.





Sidonius Letters v. 17.<sup>69</sup>

To friend Eriphius. By and by, having for some time felt sluggish for want of exertion, we resolved to do something energetic. Thereupon we raised a two-fold clamour demanding according to our ages either ball or gaming board, and these were soon forthcoming. I was the leading champion of the ball: for, as you know, ball no less than book is my constant companion.

. . . . (Philomathius) was repeatedly pushed by the inside runner from his place in the standing circle, then again, being brought inside the ring, he failed alike to cut across or to dodge the path of the ball on its course, as it flew close to his face or was flung over his head; and he would often bend low in a flying tackle and then scarcely manage to recover from his staggering swerve. So he was the first to retire from the stress and strain of the game, puffing and blowing in a state of internal inflammation: indeed his poor swollen liver sent frequent stabs of pain through his overtaxed body.<sup>70</sup>

Isidore Etymologiarium sive originum xviii. 69. 2.<sup>71</sup>

Trigon and arenata are two types of ball games. Trigon is that game which is played with three persons. Arenata is that game which is begun in a group, that is accustomed, while standing close and expectant side by side in a circle, outside a determined area to receive the ball and begin the game. It is called the elbow game when two players who are nearest and with elbows almost joined strike the ball close at hand. It is called the calf-of-the-leg game when they approach the ball to be struck to the fellow-players with the extended lower leg.

<sup>69</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 229.

<sup>70</sup>Meridin, op. cit., claims this description to be that of a game of harpastum. R. W. Moore says it is akin to a modern game as outlined in a manual, issued by the Army School of Physical Training, Aldershot, viz: Players stand in a circle one or two paces apart, facing inward, with one player inside the circle. The football is passed, low, by hand from one player to another, and the player inside the circle endeavours to intercept it. (Greece and Rome, I, 118)

<sup>71</sup>Op. cit., trans. from the Latin text.





E. Galen on Ball-Play.

Galen Exercise with the Small Ball 1 ff.<sup>72</sup>

How beneficial to one's health gymnastic exercises are, Epigenes, and how they should point the way to diet has been satisfactorily discussed by the most eminent philosophers and physicians of olden times; but how much superior to other exercises are those with the small ball has never yet been adequately set forth by former writers. I am justified then in sending you my conclusions on it, both for criticism by you--you do have experience in this game far above average--and for a circulation, advantageous to me, among your acquaintances.

Now I maintain that the best gymnastic exercises of all are those which not only exercise the body but also bring delight to the mind. The men who devised hunting with hounds and the other kinds of hunting were philosophers and were accurately acquainted with man's nature because they mixed into the toil of it, pleasure, delight, rivalry. But in the game with the small ball there are other special advantages which I shall now set forth.

First, its convenience. At any rate, if you would call to mind how much equipment and how much leisure is needed for all phases of the chase but especially for hunting with dogs, you would clearly understand that it is impossible for anyone taking part in the government, or working at the trades to participate in such sports. . . . But ball playing alone is so democratic that not even the poorest person lacks equipment for it, for it takes no nets, no weapons, no horses, no hunting dogs, but just a ball and a small one at that. So little does it interfere with a man's pursuits that it does not compel him to slight a single one of them for its sake. And what could be more convenient than the sport which admits persons of every station and of every walk in life?

That it is also the most satisfactory all-round exercise, you could best ascertain by looking into the nature and possibilities of every other exercise. You will find that one is violent, another mild, another exercises the lower more than the upper part of the body, or some special part, such as the hips, head, arms, or chest. But of the other exercises there is none that keeps in motion all parts of the body equally and can be increased to a very violent one then toned down again to the mildest one; but exercise with the small ball is the only one to accomplish this. . . . Whenever the players stand on opposite sides and work hard to prevent the man in the middle from snatching the ball away, then it becomes a very important and violent exercise requiring a mixture of numerous neck-holds and wrestling

<sup>72</sup>Cited in Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 185.





grips. The result is that the head and the neck are exercised by the neck-holds, while the sides, chest, and abdomen are exercised by the encircling clinches, the shoving, the bracing, and the other wrestling holds. In this manner of playing, too, the hips and the legs are put to a severe strain; for of course there is need of a firm footing in such exertion. The combination of running forwards and jumping sideways is no slight exercise for the legs--rather, if the truth be told, it is the only exercise that calls into play properly all the leg muscles. For, as persons move forward, one set of tendons and muscles functions more actively, and similarly another set as they leap sideways. But whoever moves the legs in only one kind of motion, as in the case with runners, causes them to be unevenly and irregularly developed.

Just as this exercise is a good one for the legs, so it is also an especially good one for the arms, since the players are accustomed to catch the ball in all sorts of positions. The arms too, will have the various muscles strained in varying degrees, at different times, due to the variety of catching positions.

That playing with the small ball trains the eye is readily understood, if you remember that a man will surely fail to catch the ball unless he accurately observes in advance where its weight will carry it. Besides, he sharpens his judgement by planning how not to let the ball slip and how to hinder his opponent. . . . Mental exertion, alone, makes a person thin; but if it is combined with some physical exercise and rivalry ending in pleasure, it very greatly assists the body to health and the mind to intelligence. This is no unimportant advantage of an exercise, if it can help both the body and the mind toward the perfection innate in each.

It is not hard to see that ball-playing can train men in the two most important activities which the supreme laws of state obligate its generals to undertake. . . to attack at the right moment. . . and to guard accumulated plunder. Now, really, is there any other exercise so suited to training one either to guard his gains, or to retrieve his losses, or to foresee the plans of the enemy? I should be amazed if anyone could mention one. Most exercises have the very opposite effect, making people lazy, sleepy, and dull. Even those who work at wrestling tend to become corpulent rather than intelligent; at any rate, many have grown so fat that they have a hard time of it to breathe. Such persons would be of no account as generals of a war or as administrators of imperial and civil affairs--a person would trust any mission to pigs sooner than to them.

Perhaps you may suppose that I am in favour of running and other weight-reducing exercises. Such is not the case. Lack of moderation I everywhere condemn, and I maintain that every art should practise moderation; whatever lacks moderation is not good. Therefore I do not approve of running, for it wears a man down thin and furnishes no training in bravery. Victory in battle comes not to the fleet of foot, but





to those who are able to prevail in a hand-to-hand encounter; and therefore the Spartans did not become the most powerful people because of running fast but by boldly standing their ground. And if you would look at it from the standpoint of health, exercise is unhealthy to the same extent that it develops the parts of the body unequally. In running, some portions of the body are necessarily overtaxed, while others are absolutely idle. Neither of these conditions is beneficial but both nourish the seeds of disease and weaken one's strength.

I heartily commend then, any exercise which can provide physical health, harmonious development of the limbs, and mental excellence--and all of these are furnished by the exercise with the small ball. It can benefit the mind in every way, and it trains evenly all parts of the body, thus contributing in the highest degree to health, and thus effecting a symmetry in the physical condition--for it causes no immoderate corpulence and no excessive thinness. Furthermore, it is adapted to actions requiring strength and is suitable to those which demand speed. Thus ball-playing, in its most strenuous form, is in no particular inferior to any other sport.

Let us consider it, on the other hand, in its mildest form. There are times when we need that type, either because of our age which is either not yet equal to severe exertion, or no longer so, or because we wish to relax from work, or recuperate from an illness. Here too, it seems to me, this sport has a great advantage over any other; for there is no other so mild if you wish to practise it mildly. The person who desires moderate, not excessive exercise, should move forward quietly at times and then again remain in his place, without exerting himself very much, and afterwards should enjoy a soft rub-down with oil and a hot bath. This exercise is the gentlest of them all, so that it is very helpful for a person needing rest, decidedly effective in restoring impaired strength, and very beneficial for old and young alike.

Whatever exercises are more arduous than what I have just described, yet milder than the excessively strenuous kind, are practised by the use of the small ball. A person should know this if he wishes to take part in the game correctly in every way. For if ever, because of some necessary work, as often happens to all of us, you should overtax either the upper or lower part of the body, or merely the hands or the feet, you have the opportunity in this game of resting the members previously wearied. The parts which have previously remained altogether idle can then be brought to a condition of exercise equal to that of the parts formerly exercised. Throwing the ball vigorously from a suitable distance, which requires little or no exertion on the part of the legs, allows rest for the lower parts of the body but exercises the upper parts rather strenuously. If a person quickly runs over a considerable area and throws occasionally, from a great distance, he exercises the lower parts of the body more strenuously. But quickness and speed in the game, without heavy exertion, serve more to develop the lungs; vigorous action in tackling, throwing and catching, without





speed to be sure, serves more to stretch and to strengthen the body. If the vigorous action is at the same time speedy, this will greatly exercise both the body and the breathing, and will be the most violent of all exercises. How much it is proper to strain or to relax in individual cases, can not be put in writing--there is no telling the amount for each person; but in actual experience--the final authority for everything--one can discover and teach the correct amount. For the correct kind of exercise is not beneficial if it is spoiled by the amount used. This should be the concern of the gymnastics trainer who is to be in charge of the exercises.

And now let me bring this discussion to a conclusion. In stating the advantages of this exercise, I do not want to omit the one that it is free from the dangers which most other sports encounter. Sprints have killed many a man before now, by causing him to burst an important blood-vessel. Likewise, a loud shouting, violently sustained without a pause, has been the cause of very serious ills to many. Horseback riding of a strenuous sort has ruptured parts in the region of the kidneys, and has often brought injuries to the chest or sometimes to the spermatic passages, to say nothing of stumbling done by horses, because of which riders have often-times been pitched from their seat and instantly killed. So, too, jumping has injured many, and discus throwing, and bending exercises. What need is there even to mention the men from the wrestling school? They are all maimed no less than the Prayers of Homer, as that poet puts it: "Lame and wrinkled and eyes askance," (*Iliad* ix. 503.). In this condition you can see the men from the wrestling school, lame, wrenched, bruised, or altogether disabled in some part. Indeed, if besides the advantages already mentioned, there is present in exercises with the small ball this advantage that they are free from danger, then from the standpoint of benefit derived, they must be the best exercises of all ever devised.



## PLATE II

Figure 1.

Girls playing ball at the baths. A mosaic from a Roman villa at Piazza, Sicily.

Source: C. Diem, Weltgeschichte des Sports und der Leibeserziehung, (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1960), p. 296.

Figure 2.

A ball game requiring a protected forearm.

Source: Emmett A. Rice, and John L. Hutchinson, A Brief History of Physical Education, (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1952), p. 48.

Figure 3.

A painting from the Baths of Titus, with possible application to the game of trigon.

Source: Daremberg and Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquités--Grecques et Romaines, (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck u Verlagsanstalt, 1962), IV, 477.

Figure 4.

The children on the left are playing one of the rolling games described by Ovid. The group on the right appear to be playing "throw and catch" against a wall.

Source: Rice, op. cit., p. 43.





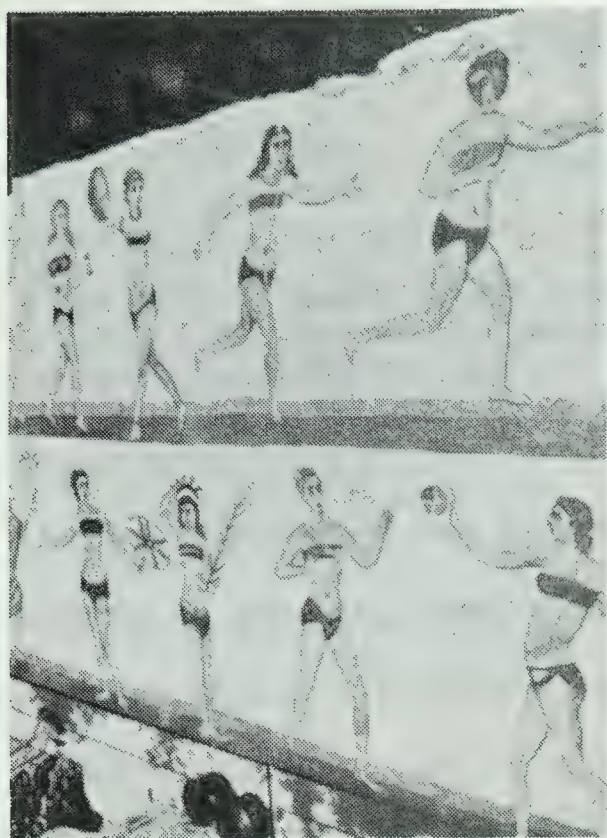


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.





## CHAPTER V

### THE PUBLIC GAMES<sup>1</sup>

Now that no one buys our votes, the public has long since cast off its cares; the people that once bestowed commands, consulships, legions and all else, now meddles no more and longs eagerly for just two things--Bread and Games.<sup>2</sup>

Juvenal's words are full of contempt both for a people who have been reduced to watching spectacles, and for an Emperor who would provide such entertainments. The Romans were rapidly becoming a nation of spectators. However, the word ludi does imply a certain amount of physical activity, and this is the basis for competitive sports. The early Romans were an active, virile people who would have enjoyed competitive sport, but whose attitude towards physical activity was limited to the increasing of military efficiency. With the drift of population to Rome as a result of the devastation of farmlands during the Punic Wars, came a necessity for providing some means of "occupation" for these new citizens. The situation was alleviated to some degree by the provision of ludi, the games. As Rome's military strength earned it more conquests, and its peoples subsequent luxuries, games became even more a source of personal enjoyment and entertainment for spectators. These games, besides catering for the populace's natural enjoyment of physical activity and spectacle, also had a religious motive.

The early festival games were a part of religious ceremonies, and

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<sup>1</sup>Discussions of athletic contests and chariot-racing have been omitted from this chapter. See Chapters VI and VII.

<sup>2</sup>Juvenal Satires op. cit. x. 78.





the Roman love of "pomp and luxury" seems to have been retained in the culture of the later era. Eventually, the religious associations and significance weakened and were subsequently lost. The Capitoline Games were ordered in honour of Jupiter in 390 B.C., when Camillus drove the Gauls from Rome.<sup>3</sup> Augustus founded the quadrennial Actian Festival in honour of his victory over Anthony at Actium, in 31 B.C.<sup>4</sup> Hadrian instituted a series of games, called the Panhellenic Games, when he gave permission for the Greeks to build in his honour the shrine which was named the Panhellenium.<sup>5</sup> He also gave the Parthian Games in A.D. 117, honouring the death of Trajan.<sup>6</sup>

In the early period of its history, no festival at Rome lasted longer than a day, but they were gradually prolonged so that towards the end of the Republic there were eight major festivals, occupying seventy-six days of the year.<sup>7</sup> Under the Empire, the number and duration of the ludi increased, so that one hundred and seventy-five days of the year were given over to public entertainments.<sup>8</sup> Of this number, many were devoted to ludi scaenici,<sup>9</sup> or performances in the theatre, and these will not receive further attention here. The remainder consisted of: (a) chariot-races in the Circus; (b) gladiatorial shows; (c) wild beast fights in the Amphi-

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<sup>3</sup>Livy op. cit. v. 50.

<sup>4</sup>Dio op. cit. li. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. lxix. 15.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. lxix. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Sir John Sandys, A Companion to Latin Studies, (Cambridge: University Press, 1935), p. 505.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 507.

<sup>9</sup>For example, fifty-five out of the regular seventy-six under the Republic, and one hundred and one out of one hundred and seventy-five by the end of the third century.



theatre;<sup>10</sup> (d) naval battles;<sup>11</sup> (e) athletic and music contests.<sup>12</sup>

Under the Empire, the ludi were usually of a varied nature, and rarely of small proportions. Augustus was very lavish in providing spectacles for the Roman public. In the frequency, variety, and magnificence of the shows which he gave, he surpassed all his predecessors.<sup>13</sup> Titus, at the dedication of the Flavian Amphitheatre (Colloseum), presented a sham sea-fight, a gladiatorial contest, and exhibited five thousand wild beasts of every kind in a single day,<sup>14</sup> the whole ceremony lasting one hundred days, during which nine thousand animals were killed.<sup>15</sup> Trajan, returning to Rome in A.D. 107, celebrated his Dacian triumph by giving spectacles on one hundred and twenty-three days, in the course of which some eleven thousand animals were slain, and ten thousand gladiators fought.<sup>16</sup> Plutarch<sup>17</sup> protests against the wasteful and cruel destruction of animals in the

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<sup>10</sup>venationes, which were comprised of (1) fights between different kinds of wild animals; (2) combats between men, bestiarii, and animals; (3) the tearing to pieces of condemned criminals; and (4) exhibition of tame animals.

<sup>11</sup>naumachiae. The amphitheatre was sometimes used for this purpose, being flooded with water sufficient to float the ships. More usually, these combats were given in specially constructed lakes.

<sup>12</sup>agones, which were contests in the Greek Style.

<sup>13</sup>Suetonius op. cit., Augustus 43.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. Titus 7.

<sup>15</sup>G. Jennison, Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome, (Manchester: University Press, 1937), p. 62.

<sup>16</sup>Dio op. cit. lxvii. 15.

<sup>17</sup>Plutarch Moralia, De Sollertia Animalium 7., from Plutarch's Essays and Miscellanies, collected by William W. Goodwin (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1909), V, 170.





theatres in his essay on the intelligence of animals. He believes that "he that is for sport and pleasure ought to seek for such as will sport and be merry with him," and he recalls the fable of the boy who threw stones at frogs--what was sport to the boy was not sport to them.

Admission to public games was free, monies being provided from the treasury. As the spectacles increased in lavishness, the allotment of public funds was inadequate to cover the cost, so it became necessary for officials to supplement them out of their private fortunes, or from donations from other interested persons, particularly those seeking public office, and desiring popularity. Cicero<sup>18</sup> writes of Milo, "acting like a fool" in preparing games to cost a million sesterces, but the death of a wealthy friend had given Milo, as his executor, the opportunity of giving games on a lavish scale in his honour.<sup>19</sup> In A.D. 51, apart from shows given by private individuals and officials, the games at Rome cost the treasury over eighty-five million dollars.<sup>20</sup>

Though a complete picture of expenditure for games cannot be obtained, it is certain that costs were of ruinous proportions, both for many individual sponsors, and the public treasury. Agrippa discusses with Augustus

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<sup>18</sup>Cicero Letters to His Friends, Letters to Quintus 3.; 8.; 9., trans. W. Glynn Williams (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1929).

<sup>19</sup>Milo is also seizing the opportunity to further his plea for consulship.

<sup>20</sup>Hardy, op. cit., p. 99. See also W. M. Green, "Appropriations for Games at Rome in A.D. 51," American Journal of Philosophy, (1930), LI, 249 f.



the apparent wastage of city resources on expenditures for a large number and variety of public games, and pleads that neither "the public treasury nor the estates of private citizens shall be ruined thereby."<sup>21</sup> Augustus committed the charge of all the festivals to the praetors,<sup>22</sup> "forbidding any one of them to spend more than another from his own means on these festivals."<sup>23</sup>

Caligula who came to power with almost three billion sesterces in the treasury, was in financial difficulties after one year because of his extravagance in the staging of all manner of spectacles.<sup>24</sup> Nerva abolished many horse races and spectacles in an attempt to reduce expenditures.<sup>25</sup>

The Circensian Games were unquestionably very popular as public entertainments, with chariot-races<sup>26</sup> as the predominant attraction. Other equestrian events, particularly the game of Troy, and trick riding were included. The game of Troy resembled more an equestrian exercise, with groups of horsemen performing in similar fashion to "counter-marching." Virgil<sup>27</sup> has provided a description of such an exhibition in his Aeneid. The game may have been reserved for the higher strata of society, as it

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<sup>21</sup>Dio op. cit. li. 29.

<sup>22</sup>This was previously the duty of the aediles. See Cicero De Legibus iii. 3. 7., trans. Clinton W. Keyes (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928).

<sup>23</sup>Dio op. cit. liv. 2.

<sup>24</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Caligula 37.; Dio op. cit. lix. 2.

<sup>25</sup>Dio ibid. lxviii. 2.

<sup>26</sup>See Chapter VI.

<sup>27</sup>Op. cit. v. 560.





is stated that Augustus "gave frequent performances of the game of Troy by older and younger boys, thinking it a time-honoured and worthy custom for the flower of nobility to become known in this way."<sup>28</sup> That there was present an element of danger is apparent from the fact that Nonius Asprenas was lamed by a fall, and that Aeserminus broke his leg while engaged in the sport.<sup>29</sup>

The gladiatorial contests, munera, came to Rome from Etruscan origins, and were first introduced in connection with the funeral of D. Junius Brutus' father in 264 B.C.<sup>30</sup> The religious association was soon lost as they came to be enjoyed as spectacles in their own right. The types of contestants were numerous, and each had a distinguishing form of weaponry. Some fought in pairs, the oldest and most usual form of combat, but mass fights became popular as they were more exciting, and were closer to actual battle scenes. The many variant types of gladiatorial combatants were as follows:<sup>31</sup>

1. The Secutores, who were armed with a sword, and a type of mace loaded with lead.
2. The Thraces who carried a scimitar similar to that used by the Thracians.
3. The Myrmillones who were armed with a buckler, and a type of scythe, and bore a fish upon the tops of their helmets. The Romans had given

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<sup>28</sup> Suetonius op. cit. Augustus 43.      <sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Livy op. cit. Summary 16.

<sup>31</sup> Horatio Smith, Festivals, Games and Amusements, (New York: Harper and Row, 1831), p. 84.



them the nickname of Gauls.

4. The Retiarii who carried a trident in one hand and a net in the other; they fought in a tunic and pursued the Myrmillones.

5. The Hoplomachi who, as their Greek name indicates, were armed "head to toe."

6. The Provocatores, adversaries of the Hoplomachi, were completely armed also.

7. The Dimachaeri who fought with a poniard in each hand.

8. The Essedarii who always fought in chariots of the style of British or Gallic war-chariots.

9. The Andabatae who fought on horseback, their eyes being closed either by a bandage or by a visor which fell down over the face.

10. The Meridiani who were so named because they entered the arena towards noon; they fought with a sword against others of the same class.

11. The Bestiarii, professed gladiators, who fought with wild beasts to display their courage and skill, like the modern bull-fighters of Spain.

12. The Fiscales, Caesariani, or Postulati, who were gladiators kept at the expense of the public treasury, as their first title imports. They took the name of Caesariani because they were reserved for those games of which the Emperors were spectators, and of Postulati because, as they were the bravest and most skilful of all the combatants, they were the most frequently called for by the people.

13. The Catevarii who were gladiators drawn from all the different





classes to fight in troops, many against many.

14. The Samnites who were so called because they were dressed in the manner of that nation,<sup>32</sup> and were often employed at feasts and entertainments to display their skill and agility in mock engagements.

Cicero<sup>33</sup> praises gladiators in the excellence of their training: "What gladiator of ordinary merit has ever uttered a groan or changed countenance. . . . there is nothing they put higher than giving satisfaction to their owner or to the people." Seneca commends them in their manner of dying,<sup>34</sup> and believes that from them men may learn that "dying is more honourable than killing."<sup>35</sup> Martial<sup>36</sup> states that Caesar freed two gladiators from further service after they had fought to a standstill.

Lord Byron,<sup>37</sup> in his long poem, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, has included two stanzas which portray vividly a gladiator's last moments, as he is "butcher'd to make a Roman holiday:"

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<sup>32</sup>The Samnites are usually described as having been armed with short, straight swords, and carrying a rectangular or oval shield, which covered most of the body.

<sup>33</sup>Tusculan Disputations op. cit. ii. 17.

<sup>34</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. xxx. 8.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. lxx. 26.

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit. On the Spectacles 39.

<sup>37</sup>Lord Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV, CXL CXLI, from The Poetical and Dramatical Works of Lord Byron, ed. John Nichols and J. C. Jeaffreson (Philadelphia: John Highlands, 1886), p. 45.



Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

## Canto IV

## CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
 He leans upon his hand--his manly brow  
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low--  
 And through his side the last drops ebbing slow  
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
 Like the first of a thunder shower; and now  
 The arena swims around him--he is gone,  
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

## CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not--his eyes  
 Were with his heart, and that was far away;  
 He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,  
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
 There were his young barbarians all at play,  
 There was their Dacian mother--he, their sire,  
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday--  
 All this rushed with his blood--shall he expire  
 And unavenged?--Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!





## LITERARY REFERENCES

### A. THE GAMES

Livy i. 35.<sup>38</sup>

(Tarquinius, approximately 600 B.C.) His first war was with the Latins, whose town of Apiolae he took by storm. Returning thence with more booty than the rumours about the war had led people to expect, he exhibited games on a more splendid and elaborate scale than former kings had done. It was then that the ground was first marked out for the circus now called Maximus. Places were divided amongst the Fathers and knights where they might each make seats for themselves; these were called "rows." They got their view from seats raised on props to a height of twelve feet from the ground. The entertainment was furnished by horses and boxers, imported for the most part from Etruria. From that time the Games continued to be a regular annual show, and were called indifferently the Roman and the Great Games.

Cicero De Legibus iii. 3. 7.<sup>39</sup>

There shall be aediles, who shall be curators of the city, of the markets, and of the customary games.

Cicero De Legibus ii. 15. 38.<sup>40</sup>

. . . in the circus there shall be contest of body with body, consisting of running, boxing and wrestling; and also horse-races which shall last until a decisive victory is won.

Cicero Letters to Atticus xvi. 5.<sup>41</sup>

(44 B.C., July 9) There had, however, been some breath of rumour that at the opening of the Greek games the audience was small, at which, indeed, I was not at all surprised; for you know what I think of Greek games.

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<sup>38</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 129.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 465.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 417.

<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 385.



Cicero Letters to His Friends vii. 1.<sup>42</sup>

To M. Marius. 55 B.C.

If it was some bodily pain or weakness of health that prevented you coming to the games, I attribute it to chance rather than to your wisdom; but if you held in contempt what the rest of the world admires, and though your health permitted of your doing so, you still had no such wish to come, then I am delighted for both reasons--that you were free from bodily pain, and that you showed strength of mind in disdaining what others unjustifiably admire. . . .

If you ask me, the games were of course, most magnificent (and) . . . excited the admiration of the people. . . .

As to the athletics, why should I suppose that you are sorry to have missed them--you, who treated the gladiators so contemptuously? And on them Pompey himself admits that he wasted both toil and oil.

There remain the wild-beast hunts, two a day for five days--magnificent, there is no denying it. But what pleasure can it possibly be to a man of culture, when either a puny human being is mangled by a most powerful beast, or a splendid beast is transfixed with a hunting spear? And even if all this is something to be seen, you have seen it more than once; and I who was a spectator, saw nothing new in it.

Augustus The Accomplishments of Augustus 22 f.<sup>43</sup>

I gave a gladiatorial show three times in my own name, and five times in the names of my sons or grandsons; at these shows about 10,000 fought. Twice I presented to the people in my own name an exhibition of athletes invited from all parts of the world, and a third time in the name of my grandson. I presented games in my own name four times, and in addition twenty-three times in the place of other magistrates. On behalf of the college of fifteen, as master of that college, with Marcus Agrippa as my colleague, I celebrated the Secular Games in the consulship of Gaius Furnius and Gaius Silanus. In my thirteenth consulship I was the first to celebrate the Games of Mars, which subsequently the consuls, in accordance with a decree of the senate and a law,

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<sup>42</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 3. This letter was written on the occasion of the dedication of Pompey's theatre and the temple of Venus Victrix, where Pompey, then in his second consulship, exhibited shows of unparalleled magnificence.

<sup>43</sup>Cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., p. 16





have regularly celebrated in the succeeding years. Twenty-six times I provided for the people, in my own name or in the names of my sons or grandsons, hunting spectacles of African wild beasts in the circus or in the Forum or in the amphitheatres; in these exhibitions about 3,500 animals were killed.

I presented to the people an exhibition of a naval battle across the Tiber where the grove of the Caesars now is, having had the site excavated 1,800 feet in length and 1,200 feet in width. In this exhibition thirty beaked ships, triremes or biremes and in addition a great number of smaller vessels engaged in combat. On board these fleets, exclusive of rowers, there were about 3,000 combatants.

Dio Roman History li. 1.<sup>44</sup>

(31 B.C.) He (Augustus) also instituted a quadrennial musical and gymnastic contest, including horse-racing--a "sacred" festival, as they call those in connection with which there is a distribution of food,--and entitled it Actia.

Dio Roman History li. 22.<sup>45</sup>

(29 B.C.) At the consecration of the shrine to Julius there were all kinds of contests, and the boys of the patricians performed the equestrian exercise called "troy," and the men of the same rank contended with chargers, with pairs, and four-horse teams.

Dio Roman History li. 29.<sup>46</sup>

(Agrippa says to Caesar Augustus, 29 B.C.) The cities should not indulge in public buildings unnecessarily numerous or large, nor waste their resources on expenditures for a large number and variety of public games, lest they exhaust themselves in futile exertions and be led by unreasonable rivalries to quarrel among themselves. They ought, indeed, to have their festivals and spectacles,--to say nothing of the Circensian games held in Rome,--but not to such an extent that the public treasury or the estates of private citizens shall be ruined thereby, or that any stranger resident there shall be compelled to contribute to their expense, or that maintenance for life shall be granted to everyone without exception who has won a victory in a contest. For it is unreasonable that the well-to-do should be put under compulsion to spend their money outside their own countries.

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<sup>44</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. VI, 5. These games were to celebrate Augustus' defeat of Anthony at Actium.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VI, 65.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VI, 153.





Dio Roman History liv. 2.<sup>47</sup>

(Augustus 22 B.C.) He committed the charge of all the festivals to the praetors, commanding that an appropriation should be given them from the public treasury, and also forbidding any one of them to spend more than another from his own means on these festivals, or to give a gladiatorial combat unless the senate decreed it, or, in fact, oftener than twice in each year or with more than one hundred and twenty men. To the curule aediles he entrusted the putting out of fires, for which purpose he granted them six hundred slaves as assistants.

Dio Roman History lxvi. 25.<sup>48</sup>

(Titus A.D. 80) Most that he did was not characterized by anything noteworthy, but in dedicating the hunting-theatre<sup>49</sup> and the baths that bear his name he produced many remarkable spectacles. There was a battle between cranes and also between four elephants; animals both tame and wild were slain to the number of nine thousand; and women (not those of any prominence however) took part in despatching them. As for the men, several fought in single combat and several groups contended together both in infantry and naval battles. For Titus suddenly filled this same theatre with water and brought in horses and bulls and some other domesticated animals that had been taught to behave in the liquid element just as on land. He also brought in people on ships, who engaged in a sea-fight there, impersonating the Corcyreans and Corinthians; and others gave a similar exhibition outside the city in the grove of Gaius and Lucius, a place which Augustus had once excavated for this very purpose. There, too, on the first day there was a gladiatorial exhibition and wild beast hunt, the lake in front of the images having been first covered with a platform of planks and wooden stands erected around it. On the second day there was a horse-race, and on the third day a naval battle between three thousand men, followed by an infantry battle.

Dio Roman History lxvii. 8.<sup>50</sup>

(Domitian A.D. 89) He also gave a very costly spectacle, in regard to which we have noted nothing of historic record except that maidens contended in the foot-race. . . . Often he would conduct the games also at night, and sometimes he would pit dwarfs and women against each other.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VI, 287.      <sup>48</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VIII, 311.

<sup>49</sup>The Flavian Amphitheatre, later known as the Colosseum.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VIII, 335.      <sup>51</sup>A novelty gladiatorial contest.





Dio Roman History lxviii. 15.<sup>52</sup>

(A.D. 107) Upon Trajan's return to Rome. . . he gave spectacles on one hundred and twenty-three days, in the course of which some eleven thousand animals, both wild and tame, were slain, and ten thousand gladiators fought.

Suetonius Julius 39.<sup>53</sup>

He gave entertainments of divers kinds: a combat of gladiators and also stage-plays in every ward all over the city, performed too by actors of all languages, as well as races in the circus, athletic contests, and a sham sea-fight. In the gladiatorial contest in the Forum, Furius Leptinus, a man of praetorian stock, and Quintus Calpenus, a former senator and pleader at the bar, fought to a finish. A Pyrrhic dance was performed by the sons of the princes of Asia and Bithynia. During the plays Decimus Laberius, a Roman knight, acted a farce of his own composition, and having been presented with five hundred thousand sesterces and a gold ring, passed from the stage through the orchestra and took his place in the fourteen rows. For the races the circus was lengthened at either end and a broad canal was dug all about it; then young men of the highest rank drove four-horse and two-horse chariots and rode pairs of horses, vaulting from one to the other. The game called Troy was performed by two troops, of younger and of older boys. Combats with wild beasts were presented on five consecutive days, and last of all was a battle between two opposing armies, in which five hundred foot-soldiers, twenty elephants and thirty horsemen engaged on each side. To make room for this, the goals were taken down and in their place two camps were pitched over against each other. The athletic competitions lasted for five days in a temporary stadium built for the purpose in the region of the Campus Martius. For the naval battle a pool was dug in the lesser Codeta and there was a contest of ships of two, three and four banks of oars, belonging to Tyrian and Egyptian fleets, manned by a large force of fighting men. Such a throng flocked to all these shows from every quarter, that many strangers had to lodge in tents pitched in the streets or along the roads, and the press was often such that many were crushed to death, including two senators.

Suetonius Augustus 43.<sup>54</sup>

He surpassed all his predecessors in the frequency, variety and magnificence of his public shows. He says that he gave games four

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VIII, 389.

<sup>53</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 53.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 191.





times in his own name and twenty-three times for other magistrates, who were either away from Rome or lacked means. He gave them sometimes in all wards and on many stages with actors in all languages, and combats of gladiators not only in the Forum or the amphitheatre but in the Circus and in the Saepta; sometimes however, he gave nothing except a fight with wild beasts.<sup>55</sup> He gave athletic contests too in the Campus Martius, erecting wooden seats; he also gave a sea-fight constructing an artificial lake near the Tiber, where the grove of the Caesars now stands. On such occasions he stationed guards in various parts of the city, to prevent it falling a prey to brigands because of the few people who remained at home. In the Circus he exhibited charioteers, runners, and slayers of wild animals who were sometimes young men of the highest rank. Besides he gave frequent performances of the game of Troy by older and younger boys, thinking it a time-honoured and worthy custom for the flower of the nobility to become known in this way. When Nonius Asprenas was lamed by a fall while taking part in this game, he presented him with a golden necklace and allowed him and his descendants to bear the surname Torquatus. But soon afterwards he gave up that form of entertainment, because Asinius Pollio the orator complained bitterly and angrily in the senate of an accident to his grandson Aeserninus, who also had broken his leg.

He sometimes employed even Roman knights in scenic and gladiatorial performances, but only before it was forbidden by decree of the senate.

Suetonius Tiberius 6 ff.<sup>56</sup>

Then, just as he was arriving at puberty, he accompanied the chariot of Augustus in his triumph after Actium, riding the left trace-horse, while Marcellus, son of Octavia, rode the one on the right. He presided too, at the city festival, and took part in the game of Troy during the performances in the Circus, leading the band of the older boys.

The principal events of his youth and later life, from the assumption of the gown of manhood to the beginning of his reign were these. He gave a gladiatorial show in memory of his father, and a second in honour of his grandfather Drusus, at different times and in different places, the former in the Forum and the latter in the amphitheatre, inducing some retired gladiators to appear with the rest by the payment of a hundred thousand sesterces to each.

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<sup>55</sup>Evidently an unusual occurrence.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 301.





Suetonius Gaius Caligula 18.<sup>57</sup>

He gave several gladiatorial shows, some in the amphitheatre of Taurus and some in the Saepta, in which he introduced pairs of African and Campanian boxers, the pick of both regions. He did not always preside at the games in person, but sometimes assigned the honour to magistrates or to friends. . . . He also gave many games in the Circus, lasting from early morning until evening, introducing between the races now a baiting of panthers, now the manoeuvres of the game called Troy; some, too, of special splendour, in which the Circus was strewn with red and green, while the charioteers were all men of senatorial rank. . . . He also started some games off-hand, when a few people called for them from the neighbouring balconies, as he was inspecting the outfit of the Circus from the Gelotian house.

Suetonius Nero 12.<sup>58</sup>

He was likewise the first to establish at Rome a quinquennial contest in three parts, after the Greek fashion, that is in music, gymnastics, and riding, which he called the Neronia; at the same time he dedicated his baths and gymnasium, supplying every member of the senatorial and equestrian orders with oil. . . . He invited the Vestal virgins also to witness the contests of the athletes, because at Olympia the priestesses of Ceres were allowed the same privilege.

Suetonius Claudius 21.<sup>59</sup>

He very often distributed largesses to the people. He also gave several splendid shows, not merely the usual ones in the customary places, but some of a new kind and some revived from ancient times, and in places where no one had ever given them before. He opened the games at the dedication of Pompey's theatre. . . . He also celebrated secular games, alleging that they had been given too early by Augustus and not reserved for the regular time; although he himself writes in his own History that when they had been discontinued for a long time, Augustus restored them to their proper place after a very careful calculation of the intervals. . . . He often gave games in the Vatican Circus also, at times with a beast-baiting between every five races. But the Great Circus he adorned with barriers of marble and gilded goals,<sup>60</sup> whereas before they had been of tufa and wood, and assigned special seats to the senators, who had been in the habit

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 429.      <sup>58</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 105.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 39.

<sup>60</sup>In the Circus Maximus, referring to the starting stalls and the turning "goals." See Chapter VI.





of viewing the games with the rest of the people. In addition to the chariot races he exhibited the game called Troy and also panthers, which were hunted down by a squadron of the praetorian cavalry under the lead of the tribunes and the prefect himself; likewise Thessalian horsemen, who drive wild bulls all over the arena, leaping upon them when they are tired out and throwing them to the ground by the horns.

He gave many gladiatorial shows and in many places: one in yearly celebration of his accession, in the Praetorian Camp without wild beasts and fine equipment, and one in the Saepta of the regular and usual kind; another in the same place not in the regular list, short and lasting but a few days, to which he was the first to apply the name of sportula, because before giving it for the first time he made proclamation that he invited the people "as it were to an extempore meal, hastily prepared." . . . He gave representations in the Campus Martius of the storming and sacking of a town in the manner of real warfare, as well as of the surrender of the kings of the Britons, and presided clad in a general's cloak.

Suetonius Titus 7.<sup>61</sup>

At the dedication of the amphitheatre<sup>62</sup> and of the baths which were hastily built near it he gave a most magnificent and costly gladiatorial show. He presented a sham sea-fight too in the old naumachia,<sup>63</sup> and in the same place a combat of gladiators, exhibiting five thousand wild beasts of every kind in a single day. . . . Not to admit any act of condescension, he sometimes bathed in the baths which he had built, in company with the common people.

Suetonius Domitian 4.<sup>64</sup>

He constantly gave grand and costly entertainments, both in the amphitheatre and in the Circus, where in addition to the usual races between two-horse and four-horse chariots, he also exhibited two battles, one between forces of the infantry and the other by horsemen; and he even gave a naval battle in the amphitheatre. Besides he gave hunts of wild beasts, gladiatorial shows at night by the light of torches, and not only combats between men but between women as well. .

He also celebrated Secular games, reckoning the time, not according to the year when Claudius had last given them, but by the previous

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 331.      <sup>62</sup>Colosseum.

<sup>63</sup>The artificial lake near the Tiber, built by Augustus.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 345.





calculation of Augustus. In the course of these, to make it possible to finish a hundred races<sup>65</sup> on the day of the contests in the Circus, he diminished the number of laps from seven to five.

He also established a quinquennial contest in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus of a threefold character, comprising music, riding, and gymnastics. . . while in the stadium there were races even between maidens.

Seneca Epistulae Morales vii. 3 ff.<sup>66</sup>

But nothing is so damaging to good character as the habit of lounging at the games; for then it is that vice steals subtly upon one through the avenue of pleasure. What do you think I mean? I mean that I come home more greedy, more ambitious, more voluptuous, and even more cruel and inhuman,--because I have been among human beings. By chance I attended a mid-day exhibition, expecting some fun, wit, and relaxation,--an exhibition at which men's eyes have respite from the slaughter of their fellow-men. But it was quite the reverse. The previous combats were the essence of compassion; but now all the trifling is put aside and it is pure murder.<sup>67</sup> The men have no defensive armour. They are exposed to blows at all points, and no one ever strikes in vain. Many persons prefer this programme to the usual pairs and to the bouts "by request." Of course they do; there is no helmet or shield to deflect the weapon. What is the need of defensive armour or skill? All these mean delaying death. In the morning they throw men to the lions and the bears; at noon, they throw them to the spectators. The spectators demand that the slayer shall face the man who is to slay him in his turn; and they always reserve the latest conqueror for another butchering. The outcome of every fight is death, and the means are fire and sword. This sort of thing goes on while the arena is empty. You may retort: "But he was a highway robber; he killed a man." And what of it? Granted that, as a murderer he deserved this punishment, what crime have you committed, poor fellow, that you should deserve to sit and see this show? In the morning they cried "Kill him! Lash him! Burn him! Why does he meet the sword in so cowardly a way? Why does he strike so feebly? Why doesn't he die game? Whip him to meet his wounds! Let them receive blow for blow, with chests bare and exposed to the stroke!" And when the games stop for the intermission, they announce: "A little throat-cutting in the meantime so there may still be something going on!"

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<sup>65</sup>Usually only twenty-four.      <sup>66</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 31 ff.

<sup>67</sup>During the luncheon interval, condemned criminals were often driven into the arena and compelled to fight, for the amusement of those spectators who remained throughout the day.





Juvenal Satires x. 80.<sup>68</sup>

Now that no one buys our votes, the public has long since cast off its cares; the people that once bestowed commands, consulships, legions, and all else, now meddles no more and longs eagerly for just two things--Bread and Games!

Fronto Correspondence, "To Lucius Verus."<sup>69</sup>

They seem to be based on the loftiest principles of political wisdom, that the Emperor did not neglect even actors and the other performers of the stage, the circus, or the amphitheatre, knowing as he did that the Roman people are held fast by two things above all, the corn-dole and the shows, that the success of a government depends on amusements as much as more serious things; neglect of serious matters entails the greater loss, neglect of amusements the greater discontent; food-largess is a weaker incentive than shows; by largess of food only the proletariat on the corn-register are conciliated singly and individually, whereas by the shows the whole population is kept in good humour. . . .

## B. GLADIATORS

Cicero Tusculan Disputations ii. 17. 40 ff.<sup>70</sup>

. . . take away an athlete's food for a single day; he will entreat Olympian Jove, the great god in whose honour he is training; he will cry out that he cannot endure it. The force of habit is great. Hunters pass the night in the snow on the mountains: Indians suffer themselves to be burnt; boxers battered by the gauntlets do not so much as utter a groan. But why mention those who regard an Olympic victory as equal to the consulship of olden days? Look at gladiators who are either ruined men or barbarians, what blows they endure! How is it that men, who have been well trained, prefer to receive a blow rather than basely avoid it? How frequently it is made evident that there is nothing they put higher than giving satisfaction to their owner or to the people! Even when weakened with wounds they send word to their owners to ascertain their pleasure: if they have given satisfaction to them they are content to fall. What gladiator of ordinary merit has ever uttered a groan or changed countenance? Who of them has disgraced himself in his fall? Who after falling has drawn in his neck when ordered to suffer the fatal stroke? Such is the force of training, practice and habit.

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<sup>68</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 199

<sup>69</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 217.

<sup>70</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 191.





Seneca Epistulae Morales xxx. 8.<sup>71</sup>

I hold that one is braver at the very moment of death than when one is approaching death. For death, when it stands near us, gives even to inexperienced men the courage not to seek to avoid the inevitable. So the gladiator, who throughout the fight has been no matter how faint-hearted, offers his throat to his opponent and directs the wavering blade to the vital spot.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lxx. 26.<sup>72</sup>

He is truly great who not only has given himself the order to die, but has also found the means.

I have promised you, however, some more illustrations drawn from the same games. During the second event in the sham sea-fight one of the barbarians sank deep in his own throat a spear which had been given him for use against his foe. "Why, oh why," he said, "have I not long ago escaped from all this torture and all this mockery? Why should I be armed and yet wait for death to come?" This exhibition was all the more striking because of the lesson men learn from it that dying is more honourable than killing.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria ix. 1. 20.<sup>73</sup>

For just as in sword play it is easy to see, parry, and ward off direct blows and simple and straight-forward thrusts, while side-strokes and feints are less easy to observe and the task of the skillful swordsman is to give the impression that his design is quite other than it actually is, even so the oratory in which there is no guile fights by sheer weight and impetus alone; on the other hand, the fighter who feints and varies his assault is able to attack flank or back as he will, to lure his opponent's weapons from his guard and to outwit him by a slight inclination of the body.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria vi. 3.<sup>74</sup>

. . . and Pedo said of a heavy armed gladiator who was pursuing another armed with a net and failed to strike him, "He wants to catch him alive."

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<sup>71</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 215.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 71.

<sup>73</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 359.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 471.



Martial On the Spectacles 29.<sup>75</sup>

While Priscus drew out, and Verus drew out the contest, and the prowess of both stood long in balance, oft was discharge for the men claimed with mighty shouts; but Caesar himself obeyed his own law: that law was, when the prize was set up, to fight until the finger was raised; what was lawful he did, oft giving dishes and gifts therein. Yet was an end found of that balanced strife: they fought well matched, well matched they together yielded. To each Caesar sent the wooden sword,<sup>76</sup> and rewards to each: this prize dextrous valour won. Under no prince but thee, Caesar, has this chanced: while two fought, each was victor.

C. THE GAME OF TROY

Virgil Aeneid v. 560. 575 ff.<sup>77</sup>

Three in number are the troops of horse, and three the riding captains; the boys, two groups of six following each other, look gay with parted troop and like commanders.<sup>78</sup>

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The Dardanians greet the bashful boys with cheers and rejoice as they gaze, seeing in them the features of their sires of old. When the lads had ridden gaily round the whole circuit of their gazing kin-folk, Epytides shouted from afar the looked-for signal and cracked his whip. They galloped apart in equal ranks, and the three companies, parting their bands, broke up the columns; then recalled, they wheeled about and charged with levelled lances.<sup>79</sup> Next they enter on other marches and other counter-marches in opposing groups, interweaving

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<sup>75</sup>Epigrams op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 23.

<sup>76</sup>A symbol of honourable discharge from service.

<sup>77</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 483.

<sup>78</sup>Thirty-six boys were divided into three companies (turmae), which were commanded alike (paribus magistris), each having a captain (terni ductores). The ductores and the magistri are the same. Each company again, was divided into two groups (chorio) of six each.

<sup>79</sup>After riding in double column down the centre, the boys wheeled, half to the right and half to the left, and galloped to the sides of the arena; then, at Epytides' command, they turned right about face, and the two sides (eighteen each) charged each other. The three captains probably acted as pivot points or marked the centre of the field, where the charging half-companies reformed in marching column.





circle with alternate circle, and waking an armed mimicry of battle. And now they bare their backs in flight, now turn their spears in charge, now make peace and ride on side by side. As of old in high Crete 'tis said the Labyrinth held a path woven with blind walls, and a bewildering work of craft with a thousand ways, where the tokens of the trail were broken by the undiscoverable and irretraceable maze: even in such a course do the Trojan children entangle their steps, weaving in sport their flight and conflict, like dolphins that, swimming through the wet main, cleave the Carpathian or Libyan seas and play amid the waves. This manner of horsemanship, these contests Ascanius first revived when he girt Alba Longa with walls, and taught the early Latins, even as he himself solemnized them in boyhood, and with him the Trojan youth. The Albans taught their children; and from them in turn mighty Rome received them and kept as an ancestral observance; and today the boys are called Troy and the troop Trojan.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>The brilliant equestrian sports, known as ludus Troiae, were introduced by Sulla, and fully developed by Augustus. Virgil, in compliment to the Emperor, connects them with Aeneas and Ascanius.



## PLATE III

Figure 1.

Two gladiators under instruction.

Source: Sport ed Arte, Giochi Della XVII Olimpiade, (Roma, 1960), Plate 153.

Figure 2.

A gladiator's helmet.

Source: Ibid., Plate 159.





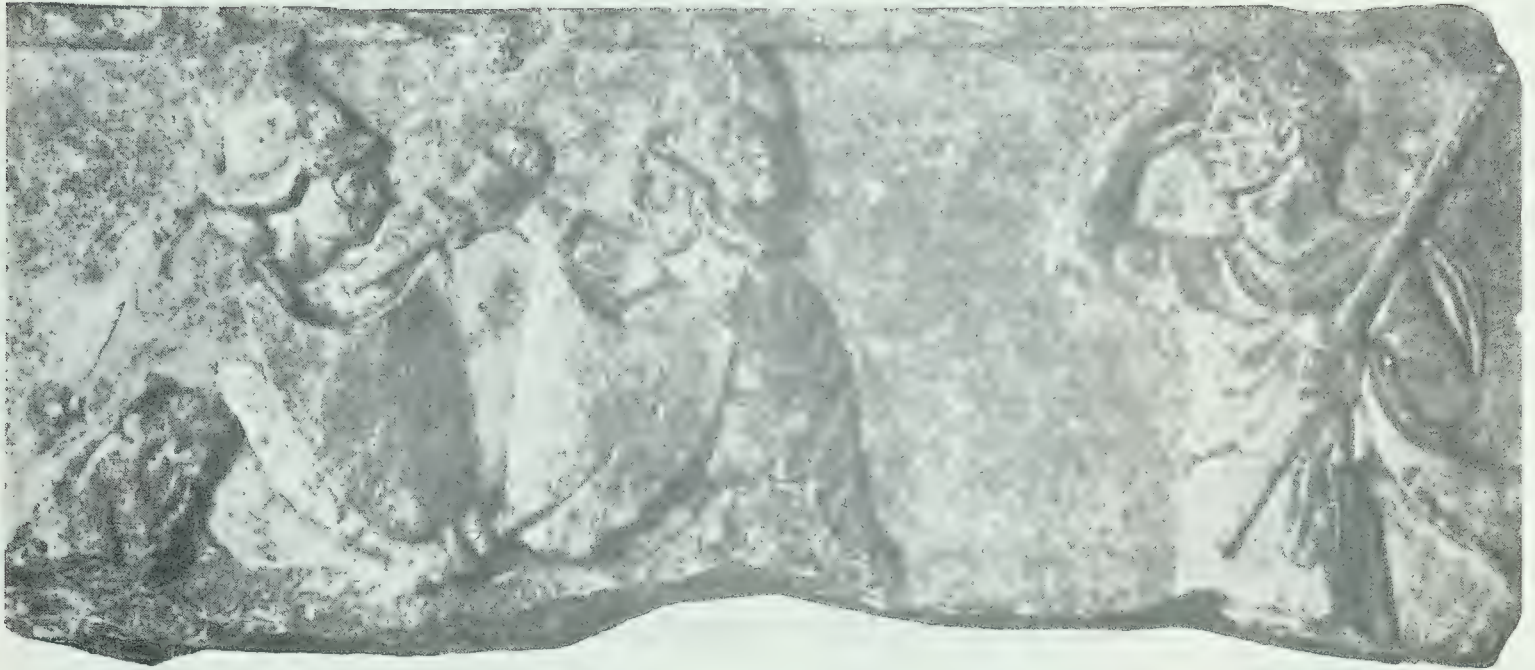


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



## PLATE IV

## THE "COLCHESTER" VASE

This vase, from the late second century A.D., depicts gladiators and hunters (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1.

This figure shows two venatores (arena-hunters), one naked except for a loin cloth, who is grasping a short stick, the other equipped with a belt and arm-guards and who brandishes a whip over a bear.

Source: J. M. C. Toynbee, Art in Roman Britain, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1962), Plate 176.

Figure 2.

This figure depicts two gladiators in combat. The Samnite (on the left) has a crested visor-helmet, a cylindrical shield, arm-guard, belt, leg protection, and a short sword. His opponent is a retiarius wearing arm-guard and belt; he has raised the first finger of his right hand to indicate that he is beaten, his net having disappeared, and his trident lying at the feet of the Samnite.

Source: Ibid., Plate 177.

Figure 3.

A relief from the tomb of Scaurus, Pompeii, showing a bestiarius rehearsing (See Plate VI, Figure 3).

Source: Th. Schreiber, Atlas of Classical Antiquities, (London: Macmillan Co., 1895), Plate XXX, Figure 5.







Figure 2.



Figure 1.

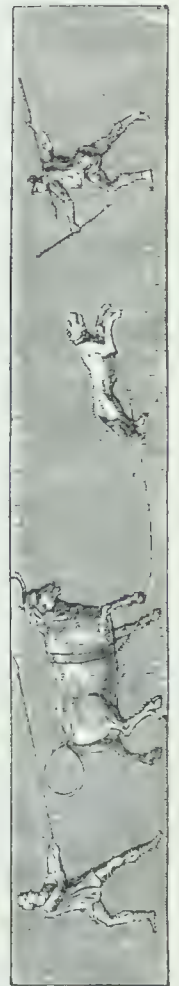


Figure 3.



## PLATE V

Figure 1.

Secutores and Retiarii. This is a line drawing of a mosaic found in Rome. Astinax defeats Kalendio (the leaf after the name signifies the winner, whereas the Ø indicates the name of the loser).

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate XXXI, Figure 3.

Figure 2.

Two murmillones (Symmachius and Maternus), in combat with umpires looking on. In the upper half of the picture, Maternus lies on the ground with the sign of death (Ø) after his name.

Source: Ibid., Figure 4.

Figure 3.

A relief from the tomb of Scaurus, Pompeii, showing various gladiatorial contests.

Source: Ibid., Plate XXX, Figure 3.





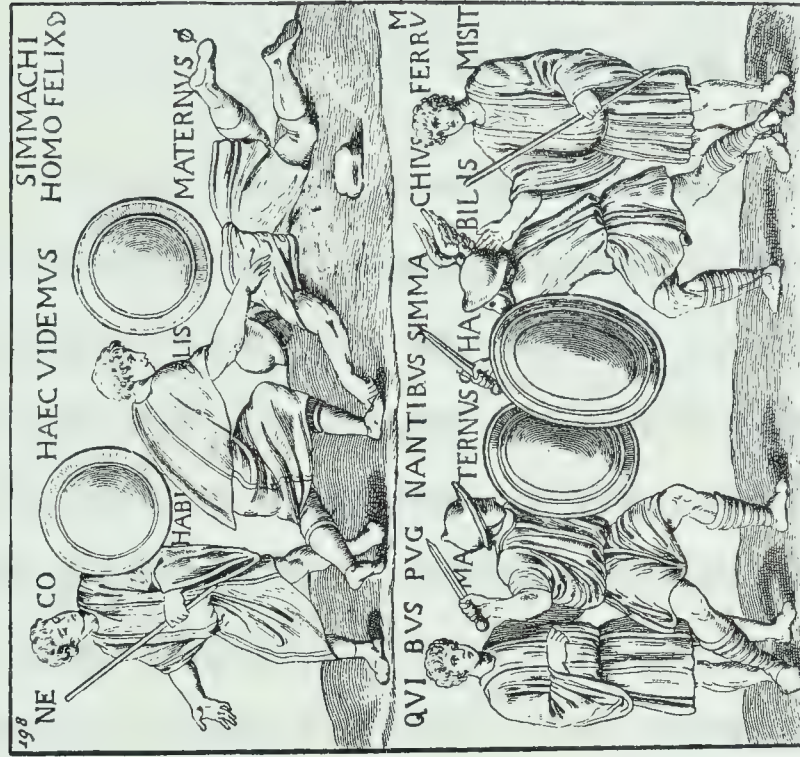


Figure 2.

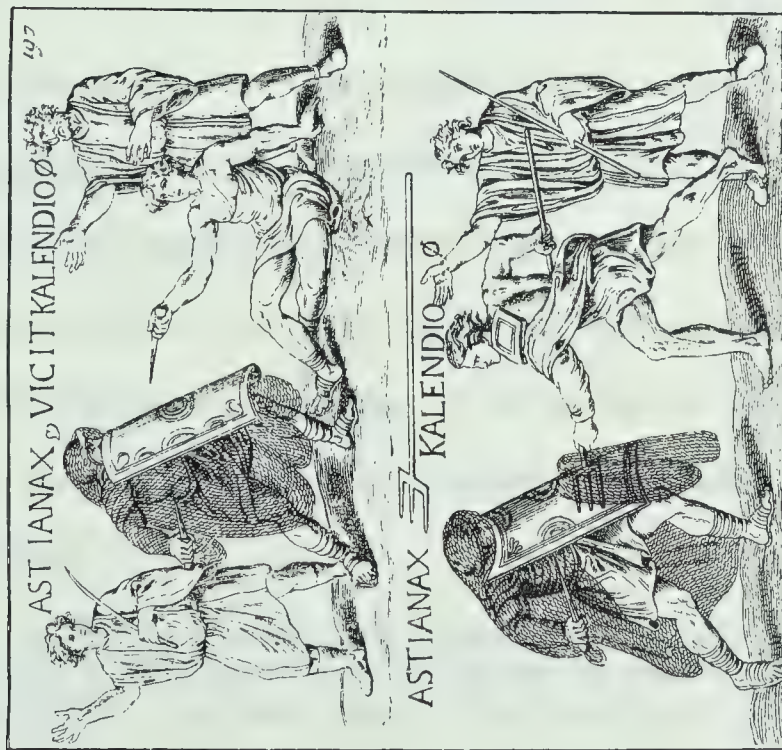


Figure 1.

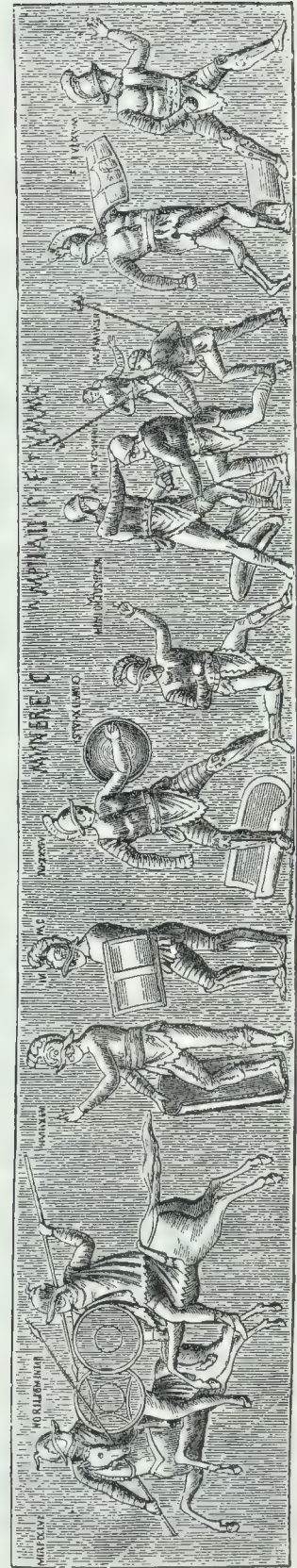


Figure 3.





## CHAPTER VI

### CHARIOT-RACING

The Circensian Games consisted mainly of chariot-races which were held in specially built arenas, the best known being the Circus Maximus. In the early days of Rome, however, when the races were part of the funeral games, they took place on open ground with trees or stones to mark the turning points. A popular meeting place, the narrow level valley 600 metres long and 150 metres wide,<sup>1</sup> between the Palatine and Aventine Hills, provided a natural race-course. On this site the Circus Maximus was developed, described by Dionysius in 7 B.C. as an arena "destined to become in time one of the most beautiful and most admirable structures in Rome."<sup>2</sup> He states that, at that time, the Circus was "three and one-half stadia" (621 metres) long and four "plethra" (118 metres) wide. At the west end were the carceres, or starting-pens, in which the chariots waited until the white cloth, mappa, was thrown down by the presiding official, and the barriers removed at the sound of a trumpet. Along the middle of the arena ran a dividing wall, spina, at each end of which were the turning points, metae, consisting of three pillars. Measurements taken from the ruins reveal that:<sup>3</sup>

The length of the arena was 568 metres, and its width increased from 75 metres at the carceres to 84 at the beginning of the spina and 87 at its east end. The length of the spina was 344 metres, and

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<sup>1</sup>Platner and Ashby, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Roman Antiquities op. cit. iii. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Platner and Ashby op. cit., p. 118.





the total length of the Circus 600. The width of the cavea proper was 27 metres, but this was much increased by the additions built over the streets on the north and south sides. The extreme width thus secured on the Palatine side was about 80 metres, and the maximum width of the circus about 200.

The spina did not run exactly along the axis of the arena; the metae nearest the starting-point were closer to the seats on the left, thus allowing more room on the right for the chariots crowded together in the first few seconds of the race.<sup>4</sup> Races were usually of seven laps, and where Livy<sup>5</sup> writes that egg-shaped markers were used to designate the laps in 174 B.C., Dio<sup>6</sup> adds that dolphins were also employed in 33 B.C. to avoid "mistakes about the number of laps completed." It appears that the eggs located at the far end of the spina were removed for the half-laps, while the dolphins located at the near end were turned when a full lap was completed. Each driver stood in his car encircled by the reins which went round his back. This enabled him to throw all his weight against the horses by leaning backwards, but it greatly increased the risk of injury during accidents. To avoid this peril, a curved knife was carried at the waist for the purpose of cutting the reins should an emergency arise.

A day's racing usually consisted of twenty-four events.<sup>7</sup> Proof that the Roman's love of the sport was in no way less than that which contemporary society holds for horse-racing, is demonstrated by the

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<sup>4</sup>Moore, The Roman's World, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>5</sup>Op. cit. xli. 27.6.

<sup>6</sup>Op. cit. xlix. 43.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. lx. 27. Carcopino (op. cit., p. 237), says that under Augustus, it was customary to have a dozen races in a day. Under Caligula the number was doubled.



chronicled effects it had on its followers: some consuls were rendered impecunious;<sup>8</sup> skilful and successful drivers grew rich;<sup>9</sup> favourite horses and their drivers lived in splendour;<sup>10</sup> whilst those drivers of an unfavoured faction feared for their lives.<sup>11</sup>

In order that the spectators could distinguish between the competitors, and so follow their favourites more easily, the drivers raced in different colours. Four colours were commonly used, Red, White, Green, and Blue, and Domitian added two more, Gold and Purple, which did not remain long in use.<sup>12</sup> Pliny<sup>13</sup> scoffs at the crowds at the races who follow a colour rather than a skill, so that "if during the running the racers were to exchange colours, their partisans would change sides, and instantly forsake the very drivers and horses whom they were clamorously saluting by name." Nero regarded horse-racing as "a royal accomplishment."<sup>14</sup> Pliny,<sup>15</sup> however, is "astonished that so many thousands of grown men should be possessed again and again with a childish passion to look at galloping horses."

Estimates on the spectator capacity of the Circus Maximus vary with authors. Dionysius<sup>16</sup> estimated 150,000 for the Augustan building.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Martial op. cit. x. 74.

<sup>10</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Caligula 55.

<sup>11</sup>Dio op. cit. lix. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Domitian 7.

<sup>13</sup>Letters op. cit. ix. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Tacitus Annals op. cit. xiv, 141.

<sup>15</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup>Loc. cit.





Pliny the Elder<sup>17</sup> raised the figure to 250,000 in his time, while Gibbon<sup>18</sup> places the capacity still higher at 400,000, in the following description of the onlookers:

The impatient crowd rushed at the dawn of day to secure their places, and there were many who passed a sleepless and anxious night in the adjacent porticoes. From the morning to the evening, careless of the sun or of the rain, the spectators, who sometimes amounted to the number of four hundred thousand, remained in eager attention; their eyes fixed on the horses and charioteers, their minds agitated with hope and fear for the success of the colours which they espoused.

Throughout the Republic the Circus was used for gladiatorial combats and wild beast fights, as well as for races; but after the building of the amphitheatre of Statilus Taurus, and then Nero's replacement of this, and particularly the building of the Colosseum, the first two forms of entertainment were usually not seen in the Circus. The last recorded Circus Games took place under Totila in A.D. 555, and in that century, the destruction of the Circus began.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Natural History op. cit. xxxvi. 24. 102.

<sup>18</sup>Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, abridged D. Low (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), Ch. 31, p. 441.

<sup>19</sup>Platner and Ashby op. cit., p. 119. See also pp 111-120 for historical reports on other Circuses at Rome, for example, Circus Flaminius, and Caligula's private course, the Circus Gai et Neronis, used also by Claudius and Nero.



## LITERARY REFERENCES

Dionysius Roman Antiquities iii. 68.<sup>20</sup>

Tarquinius also built the Circus Maximus, which lies between the Aventine and Palatine Hills, and was the first to erect covered seats around it on scaffolding (for till then the spectators had stood), the wooden stands being supported by beams. And dividing the places among the thirty curiae, he assigned to each curia a particular section, so that every spectator was seated in his proper place. This work was also destined to become in time one of the most beautiful and most admirable structures in Rome. For the Circus is three stades and a half in length and four plethra in breadth.<sup>21</sup> Round about it on the two longer sides and one of the shorter sides a canal has been dug, ten feet in depth and width, to receive water.<sup>22</sup> Behind the canal are erected porticoes three stories high, of which the lowest story has stone seats, gradually rising, as in the theatres, one above the other, and the two upper stories wooden seats. The two longer porticoes are united into one and joined together by means of the shorter one, which is crescent shaped, so that all three form a single porticoe like an amphitheatre, eight stades in circuit, and capable of holding 150,000 persons. The other of the shorter sides is left uncovered and contains vaulted starting places for the horses, which are all opened by means of a single rope.<sup>23</sup> On the outside of the Circus there is another porticoe of one story which has shops in it and habitations over them. In this porticoe there are entrances and ascents for the spectators at every shop, so that the countless thousands of people may enter and depart without inconvenience.

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<sup>20</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 241.

<sup>21</sup>A stade was 600 Greek feet, a plethron 100 feet. The Attic foot measured 295.7 mm., compared to the Roman 296 mm., and the English 301 mm. Hence the Circus was 621 metres long and 118 metres wide at that time.

<sup>22</sup>To keep wild animals away from the spectators. Under Nero, it was filled in.

<sup>23</sup>The Greeks had a rope drawn across the bounds of their race-course and this was let down as a starting signal. In the Circus the barriers at each entrance consisted of folding gates, which were all thrown open at the same moment by slaves, two at each barrier; possibly this was done with the aid of a rope or ropes. (Translator's note).





Livy xli. 27. 6.<sup>24</sup>

(174 B.C.) . . . during the consulship of Marcus Aemilius, stalls were added to the Circus, and egg-shaped markers to designate the laps.

Ovid The Amores iii. 2. 65 ff.<sup>25</sup>

. . . the praetor has started the four-horse cars from the equal barrier.

. . . . Ah, miserable me, he has circled the post in a wide curve! 'What are you doing? The next hugs close with his axle, and gains on you. What are you doing wretch? Pull, I entreat, the left rein with all your might! We are favouring a good-for-nought! . . . but call them back, Quirites, and toss your togas in signal from every side.'<sup>26</sup> See, they call them back!'

And now the starting-chambers are unbarred again, and the gates are open wide; the many coloured rout comes flying forth with reins let loose to their steeds.

Martial Epigrams vi. 46.<sup>27</sup>

The four-horse car of the Blue charioteer is repeatedly lashed on, and yet goes slow. You are doing a great feat, Catianus.

Martial Epigrams x. 74.<sup>28</sup>

How long at levees, among the escort and the full-dressed throng, shall I earn a hundred worthless farthings in a whole day, whereas, in a single hour, Scorpis, a winner of the race, bears off fifteen bags of gleaming gold?

<sup>24</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. XII, 279.

<sup>25</sup>Heroides and Amores trans. Grant Showerman (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914), p. 455.

<sup>26</sup>The dissatisfied populace could thus demand a fresh start.

<sup>27</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 387. Martial means that Catianus pulled his horses, not wishing to win as this faction was out of favour with Domitian.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 211.



Martial Epigrams xiv. 55.<sup>29</sup>

You will make no way with the whip though you may continually use the lash, if your courser be of the Purple faction.

Tacitus The Annals xiv. 14.<sup>30</sup>

(Nero) It was an old desire of his to drive a chariot and team of four, and an equally repulsive ambition to sing to the lyre in the stage manner. "Racing with heroes," he used to observe, "was a royal accomplishment, and had been practised by the commanders of antiquity: the sport had been celebrated in the praises of poets and devoted to the worship of Heaven . . ."

Juvenal Satires xi. 193 ff.<sup>31</sup>

Meantime the solemn Idaean rite of the Megalesian napkin<sup>32</sup> is being held; there sits the Praetor in his triumphal state, the prey of horseflesh; and (if I may say so without offence to the vast unnumbered mob) all Rome today is in the Circus. A roar strikes upon my ear which tells me that the Green has won; for had it lost, Rome would be as sad and dismayed as when the Consuls were vanquished in the dust of Cannae. Such sights are for the young, whom it befits to shout and make bold wagers with a smart damsel by their side.

Pliny Letters ix. 6.<sup>33</sup>

I have spent these several days past among my papers with the most pleasing tranquility imaginable. You will ask how that can possibly be in the midst of Rome? Why, The Circensian Games<sup>34</sup> were taking place; a kind of entertainment for which I have not the least taste. They have no novelty, no variety, nothing, in short, one would wish to see twice. I am the more astonished that so many thousands of grown men should be possessed again and again with a childish

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 459. The Purple was not favoured by Domitian any more than the Blue, although it and the Gold had been added by him.

<sup>30</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 129.      <sup>31</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 235.

<sup>32</sup>The Megalesian games (April 4-10) were held in honour of Cybele; the praetor gave the signal for starting the chariot-race by dropping a napkin.

<sup>33</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 185.      <sup>34</sup>Games in the Circus Maximus.





passion to look at galloping horses, and men standing upright in their chariots. If, indeed, they were attracted by the swiftness of the horses or the skill of the men, one could account for this enthusiasm. But in fact it is a bit of cloth they favour, a bit of cloth that captivates them. And if during the running the racers were to exchange colours, their partisans would change sides, and instantly forsake the very drivers and horses whom they were clamorously saluting by name.

Suetonius Gaius Caligula 55.<sup>35</sup>

He was so passionately devoted to the green faction that he constantly dined and spent the night in their stable,<sup>36</sup> and in one of his revels with them he gave the driver Eutychus two million sesterces in gifts. He used to send his soldiers on the day before the games and order silence in the neighbourhood, to prevent the horse Incitatus from being disturbed. Besides a stall of marble, a manger of ivory, purple blankets and a collar of precious stones, he even gave this horse a house, a troop of slaves and furniture, for the most elegant entertainment of the guests invited in his name; and it is also said that he planned to make him a consul.

Suetonius Nero 22.<sup>37</sup>

From his earliest years he had a special passion for horses and talked constantly about the games in the Circus, although he was forbidden to do so. Once when he was lamenting with his fellow pupils the fate of a charioteer of the "Greens," who was dragged by his horses, and his preceptor scolded him, he told a lie and pretended he was talking of Hector. At the beginning of his reign he used to play every day with ivory chariots on a board, and he came from the country for all the games, even the most insignificant, at first secretly, and then so openly that no one doubted that he would be in Rome on that particular day. He made no secret of his wish to have the number of prizes increased, and in consequence more races were added and the performance was continued to a late hour, while the managers of the troupes no longer thought it worth while to produce their drivers at all except for a full day's racing. He soon longed to drive a chariot himself and even to show himself frequently in public; so after a

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<sup>35</sup>Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 489.

<sup>36</sup>The "stable" was in reality a kind of club, containing the quarters of the drivers as well as the stables of the horses.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 119.



trial exhibition in his gardens before his slaves and the dregs of the populace, he gave all an opportunity of seeing him in the Circus Maximus, one of his freedmen dropping the napkin from the place usually occupied by the magistrates.

Suetonius Domitian 7.<sup>38</sup>

He added two factions of drivers in the Circus, with gold and purple as their colours, to the four former ones.

Dio Roman History xlix. 43.<sup>39</sup>

(Agrippa as aedile, 33 B.C.) And seeing that in the circus men made mistakes about the number of laps completed, he set up the dolphins and egg-shaped objects<sup>40</sup> so that by their aid the number of times the course had been circled might be clearly shown. Further more he distributed olive-oil and salt to all, and furnished the baths free of charge throughout the year for the use of both men and women; and in connection with the many festivals of all kinds he gave--on such a scale in fact, that the children of senators also performed the equestrian game called Troy.

Dio Roman History li. 29.<sup>41</sup>

(Agrippa to Caesar Augustus, 29 B.C.) But as to the horse-races in connection with which there are no gymnastic contests, I think that no city but Rome should be permitted to have them, the object being to prevent the wanton dissipation of vast sums of money and to keep the populace from becoming deplorably crazed over such a sport, and, above all, to give those who are serving in the army an abundant supply of the best horses. It is for these reasons, therefore, that I would altogether forbid the holding of such races anywhere else than here in Rome; as to the other games, I have proposed to keep them within bounds, in order that each community, by putting upon an inexpensive basis its entertainments for both eye and ear, may live with greater moderation and less factious strife.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 353.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. V, 429.

<sup>40</sup>Livy xlii. 27., says the marble eggs were first set up in 174 B.C. It is probable that Agrippa added the dolphins.

<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. VI, 153.





Dio Roman History lix. 14.<sup>42</sup>

(A.D. 39, Gaius Caligula) Gaius poisoned horses and charioteers of rival factions; for he was strongly attached to the party that wore the frog-green, which from this colour was also called the Party of the Leek. Hence even today the place where he used to practise driving the chariots is called Gaianum after him. One of the horses, which he named Incitatus, he used to invite to dinner, where he would offer him golden barley and drink his health in wine from golden goblets.

Dio Roman History lvi. 6.<sup>43</sup>

(A.D. 54, Nero) He had such enthusiasm for the horse-races that he actually decorated the famous race-horses that had passed their prime with the regular street costume for men and honoured them with gifts of money for their feed. Thereupon the horsebreeders and charioteers, encouraged by this enthusiasm on his part, preceeded to treat both the praetors and the consuls with great insolence; and Aulus Fabricius, when praetor, finding them unwilling to take part in the contests on reasonable terms, dispensed with their services, and training dogs to draw chariots, introduced them in place of horses. At this, the wearers of the White and of the Red immediately entered their chariots for the races; but as the Greens and the Blues would not participate even then, Nero himself furnished the prizes for the horses and the horse-race took place.

Nonnus Dionysiaca xxxvii. 174 ff.<sup>44</sup>

Bold Actaion was led away from the crowd by his father, who addressed these loving injunctions to his eager son:

"My son, your father Aristaios has more experience than you. I know you have strength enough, that in you the bloom of youth is joined with courage; for you have in you the blood of Apollo my father, and our Arcadian mares are stronger than any for the race. But all this is in vain, neither strength nor running horses know how to win, as much as the driver's brains. Cunning, only cunning you want; for horse-racing needs a smart clever man to drive.

"Then listen to your father, and I will teach you too all the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VII, 303.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VIII, 45.

<sup>44</sup>Trans. W. H. D. Rouse (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1940), III, 49.





tricks of the horsy art which time has taught me, and they are many and various. . . . Show your horsemastery, win your events like an artist, by your own sharp wits; for without instruction one pulls the car off the course in the middle of the race, it wanders all over the place, and the obstinate horses in their unsteady progress are not driven by the whip nor obedient to the bit, the driver as he turns back misses the post, he loses control, the horses run away and carry him back where they will. But one who is a master of arts and tricks, the driver with his wits about him, even with inferior horses, keeps straight and watches the man in front, keeps a course ever close to the post, wheels his car round without ever scratching the mark. Keep your eyes open please, and tighten the guiding rein swinging the whole near horse about and just clearing the post, throwing your weight sideways to make the car tilt, guide your course by needful measure, watch until as your car turns the hub of the wheel seems almost to touch the surface of the mark with the near-circling wheel. Come very near without touching; but take care of the stone, or you may strike the post with the axle against the turning-post and wreck both horses and car together. As you guide your team this way and that way on the course, act like a steersman; ply the prick, scold and threaten the whip without sparing, press the off horse, lift him to a spurt, slacken the hold of the bit and don't let it irk him. Manage your car like a good steersman; guide your car on a straight course, for a driver's mind is like a car's rudder if he drives with his head."

With this advice he turned away and retired, having taught his son the various tricks of his trade as a horseman, which he knew so well himself.

#### A CHARIOT RACE

Silius Italicus Punica xvi. 312 ff.<sup>45</sup>

Thence he (Scipio) went back to the race-course and started the first contest--that which was to test the speed of horses. Even before the starting gate was unbarred, the excited crowd surged to and fro with a noise like the sound of the sea, and, with a fury of partisanship, fixed their eyes on the doors behind which the racers were standing.

And now the signal was given, and the bolts flew back with a noise. Scarcely had the first hoof flashed into full view, when a wild storm of shouting rose up to heaven. Bending forward like the drivers, each man gazed at the chariot he favoured, and at the same time shouted to the flying horses. The course was shaken by the

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<sup>45</sup>Trans. J. D. Duff (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1934), II, 409 ff.





enthusiasm of the spectators, and excitement robbed every man of his senses. They lean forward and direct the horses by their shouting. A cloud of yellow dust rose up from the sandy soil, concealing with its darkness the running of the horses and the exertions of the drivers. One man backs with fury the mettled steed, another the chariot-eer. Some are zealous for horses of their own country, others for the fame of some ancient stud. One man is filled with joyful hope for an animal that is racing for the first time, while another prefers the green old age of a well-tried veteran. At the start, Lampon, bred in Gallacia, left the rest behind; he rushed through the air with the flying car, galloping over the course with huge strides and leaving the winds behind him. The crowd roared with applause, thinking that with such a start their favourite had as good as won. But those who looked deeper and had more experience of the race-course, blamed the driver for putting forth all his strength at the beginning: from a distance they uttered vain protests, that he was tiring out his team with his efforts and keeping no reserve of power. "Whither are you careering too eagerly, Cynus?"--Cynus was the charioteer--"Be prudent! Put down your whip and tighten your reins!" But alas, his ears were deaf: on he sped, unsparing his horses, and forgetting how much ground had still to be covered.

Next came Panchates, a chariot-length and no more behind the leader. Bred in Asturia, he was conspicuous for the white forehead and four white feet of his sires. Though high-mettled, he was low of stature and lacked comeliness; . . .

Third in order, neck and neck with Pelorus, ran Caucasus, a fractious animal that loved not the caressing hand that patted his neck, but rejoiced to bite and champ the iron in his mouth till blood came with the foam. Pelorus, on the other hand, was more tractable and obedient to the rein; never did he swerve aside and drive the car in crooked lines, but kept to the inside and grazed the turning-post with his near wheel. He was conspicuous for the size of his neck and the thick mane that rippled over it. . . .

And now, when near half the distance was completed, they quickened over the course; and spirited Panchates, struggling to catch up the team ahead, seemed to rise higher and at each moment to mount upon the chariot in front, and the hoofs of his prancing forefeet struck and rattled on the car of the Gallacian horse. When Hiberus, who came second, saw that the Gallacian team of Cynus was tiring, that the chariot was no longer bounding ahead, and that the smoking horses were driven on by severe and repeated flogging, then, as a sudden storm rushes down from a mountain-top, he leaned forward quickly as far as the necks of his courses and hung over their crests, and stirred up Panchates, who was chafing at being second in the race, and plied his whip, even while he called to the horse: "Steed of Asturia, shall any other get in front and win the prize when you are competing? Rise up and fly and glide over the plain with all your wonted speed, as if on wings! Lampon is panting hard; his strength is gone and he grows





smaller; he has no breath left to carry to the goal." At these words, Panchates rose higher, as if he were just starting in the race; and Cyrnus, though he strove to block his rival by swerving, or to keep up with him, was soon left behind. The sky and the race-course resounded, smitten by the shouts of the spectators. Victorious Panchates raised his triumphant crest still higher as he ran on; and he drew after him his three partners in the yoke.

The two last drivers were Atlas and Durius; and now they swerved aside and resorted to tricks. First, one tried to pass his rival on the left; and then the other came up on the right and strove to get in front; but both failed in their attempted strategy. At last, Durius, young and confident, leaning forward and jerking at his reins, placed his chariot athwart his rival's course and struck the other car and upset it. Atlas, no match for the other's youth and strength, protested with justice, "Whither are you careering? Or what mad fashion is this of racing? You seek to kill me or my horses together." As he cried out thus, he fell head first from the broken chariot; and the horses too, a sorry sight, fell down and sprawled in disorder on the ground, while the conqueror shook his reins on the open course, and Pelorus flew up the middle of the track, leaving Atlas struggling to rise. It did not take him long to catch up the weary team of Cyrnus: he flew past with speedy car, though Cyrnus was learning too late the wisdom of controlling his pace. A shout of applause from his supporters drove the chariot on. And now Pelorus thrust his head over the back and shoulders of terrified Hiberus, till the charioteer felt the horse's hot breath and foam upon his neck. Durius pressed on along the plain and increased the pace of his team by the whip. Nor was the effort vain: coming up on the right, he seemed to be, or even was, running neck and neck with his rival. . . . And indeed, had he not. . . been beguiled, by too great success and by his fearful joy, into dropping his whip Durius would perhaps have consecrated to the Westwind the altars he had vowed. But now, as wretched as if the victor's wreath had fallen from his head, he turned his rage against himself, tearing the gold-embroidered garment from his breast, and weeping, and pouring out complaints to heaven. When the lash was gone, the team no longer obeyed the driver: in vain he flogged their backs with the reins for a whip.

Meanwhile Panchates, now sure of victory, sped on to the goal, and claimed the first prize with head held high. A light breeze fanned the mane that rippled over his neck and shoulders; then with proud step he raised his nimble limbs, and a great shout greeted his victory.





## CAREER OF A FAMOUS CHARIOTEER

CIL. VI. 10,048.<sup>46</sup>

Gaius Appuleius Diocles, charioteer of the Red Stable, a Lusitanian Spaniard by birth, aged 42 years, 7 months, 23 days. He drove his first chariot in the White Stable, in the consulship of Acilius Aviola and Corellius Pansa. He won his first victory in the same stable, in the consulship of Manius Acilius Glabrio and Gaius Bellicus Torquatus. He drove for the first time in the Green Stable in the consulship of Torquatus Asprenas (for the second time) and Annius Libo. He won his first victory in the Red Stable in the consulship of Laenas Pontianus and Antonius Rufinus.<sup>47</sup>

Grand totals: He drove chariots for twenty-four years, ran 4,257 starts,<sup>48</sup> and won 1,462 victories, 110 in opening races. In single entry races<sup>49</sup> he won 1,064 victories, winning 92 major purses, 32 of them (including 3 with six-horse teams) at 30,000 sesterces, 28 (including 2 with six-horse teams) at 40,000 sesterces, 29 (including 1 with a seven-horse team) at 50,000 sesterces, and 3 at 60,000 sesterces; in two-entry races he won 347 victories, including 4 with three-horse teams at 15,000 sesterces; in three-entry races he won 51 victories. He won or placed 2,900 times, taking 861 second places, 576 third places, and one fourth place at 1,000 sesterces;<sup>50</sup> he failed to place 1,351 times. He tied a Blue for first place 10 times and

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<sup>46</sup>Cited in Lewis and Reinhold, *op. cit.*, II, 230. (Rome, A.D. 146) This monument to the charioteer Diocles was erected by admirers and stable-mates, perhaps upon his retirement at the age of forty-two after twenty-four years of driving in races. Only the first part of the long inscription is given here. The remainder of the inscription (about three-fifths), under the heading "His Records," lists, in great detail, naming record-holding drivers and horses, the various records Diocles broke: "the champion of all charioteers. . . he excelled the charioteers of all the stables who ever participated in the races of the circus games."

<sup>47</sup>These consulships correspond to A.D. 122, 124, 128, and 131 respectively.

<sup>48</sup>This comes to an average of 177 races a year for the twenty-four years of Diocles' career, or an average of three to four races on each of the 50 circus days of the year.

<sup>49</sup>Races in which each of the four stables ran only one chariot. These were star events and offered the biggest prizes.

<sup>50</sup>Fourth place did not win a prize when there were only four chariots in the race.



a White 91 times, twice for 30,000 sesterces. He won a total of 35,863,120 sesterces. In addition, in races with two-horse teams for 1,000 sesterces he won three times, and tied a White once and a Green twice. He took the lead and won 815 times, came from behind to win 67 times, won under handicap 36 times, won in various styles 42 times, and won in a final dash 502 times<sup>51</sup> (216 over the Greens, 205 over the Blues, 81 over the Whites). He made nine horses 100-time winners, and one a 200-time winner.

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<sup>51</sup>The "final-sprint" victories were highly regarded.





## PLATE VI

Figures 1 and 2.

Models of racing chariots.

Source: Mary Johnston, Roman Life, (Chicago: Scott-Foresman and Co., 1932), p. 278.

Figure 3.

A bronze model of a racing chariot, found in the Tiber.

Source: British Museum, Dept. of Roman and Greek Antiquities, A Guide to the Exhibition Illustrating Greek and Roman Life, (London, 1920), p. 170.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.





## PLATE VII

Figure 1.

A terra-cotta plaque showing a four-horse chariot race. The protection for the body and the legs of the charioteer is clearly distinguishable. The horses are about to turn at the metae.

Source: Johnston, op. cit., p. 274.

Figure 2.

A statue of an aedile about to give the signal for the chariot race to begin.

Source: Ibid., p. 37.

Figure 3.

A statue of a charioteer, carrying the palm of victory. The protective bindings around the body are evident, as well as the knife used to cut the reins in case of emergency.

Source: Ibid., p. 269.



## PLATE VII



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

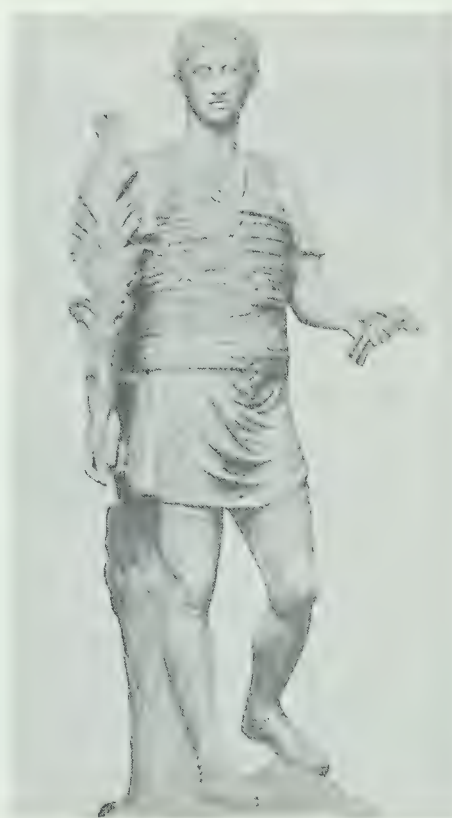


Figure 3.





## PLATE VIII

Figure 1.

A sixteenth century reproduction of the Circus Maximus showing various forms of combat, including boxing and wrestling.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 301.

Figure 2.

A model of the Circus Maximus by Architect Italo Gismondi. Note the starting stalls at the end of the arena, and the extensive seating arrangements.

Source: P. Grimal, The Civilization of Rome, op. cit., Figure 106.





PLATE VIII

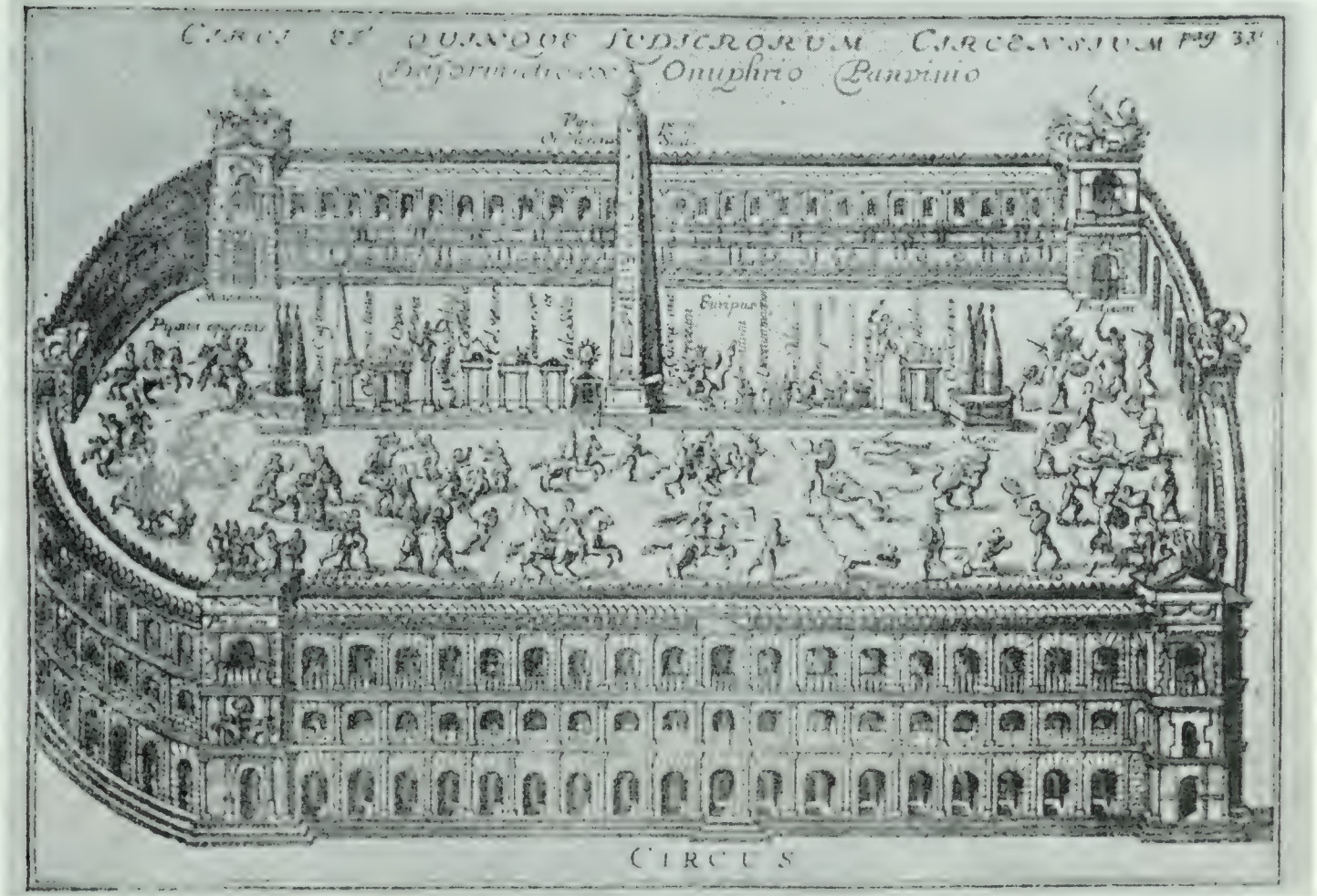


Figure 1.

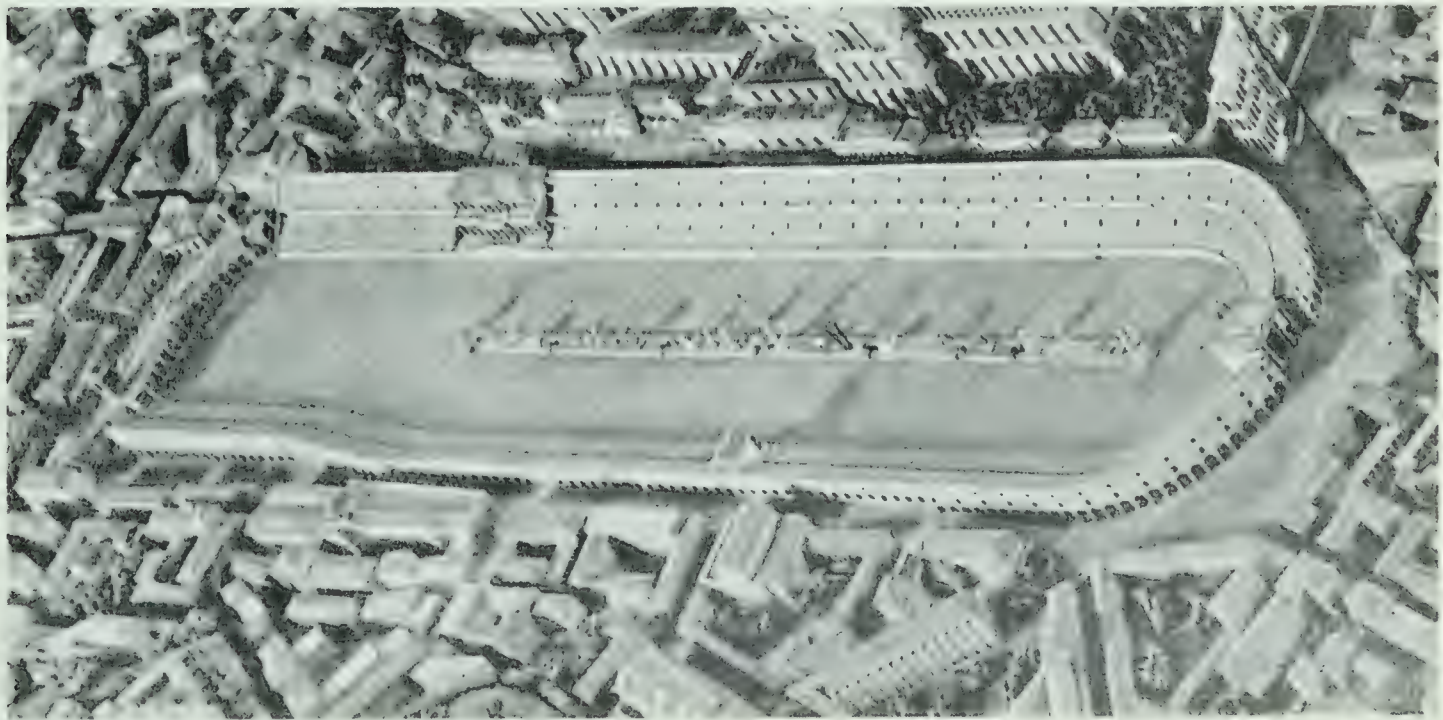


Figure 2.





## PLATE IX

Figures 1 and 2.

Mosaics depicting races in the Circus Maximus. Note the "bobbed" horse-tails in Figure 2.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plates 245 and 246.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## PLATE X

Figure 1.

A mosaic from Barcelona showing a chariot race in the Circus. The race has apparently been won by the Green faction, for the attendant who stands near the leader, waving a water-jug, has a coat of green. The victory is proclaimed by a herald who stands near the metae with white, red, and blue coats over his left arm, and waving with his right hand a green cloth. At the same time he shouts "Eridamus" which is the name of one of the leading horses. The reins may be seen to pass around the driver's back.

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate XXXII, Figure 2.

Figure 2.

A mosaic found in the Circus at Lyons. On the left are the carceres, four on each side of the main entrance. The box of the giver of the games, in which he and his friends sit under a canopy, is above the entrance. The giver holds in his right hand the mappa, with which he gave the signal to start.

Source: Ibid., Plate XXXI, Figure 2.



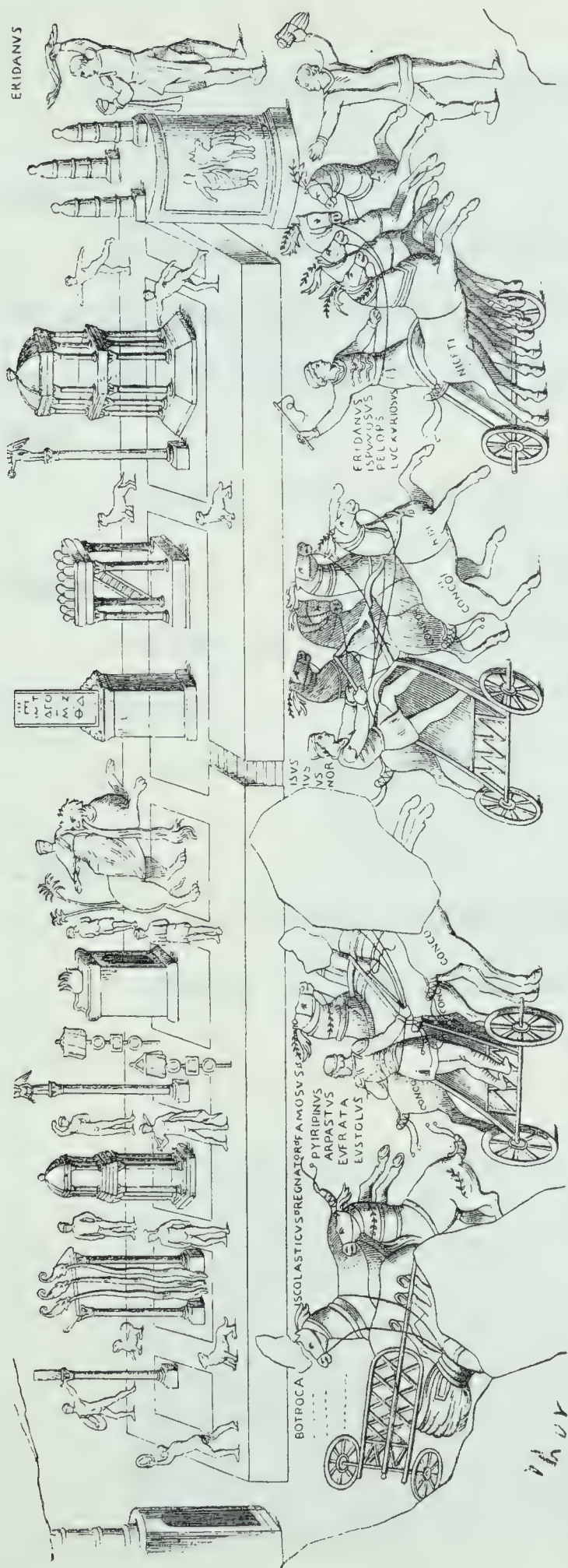


Figure 1.

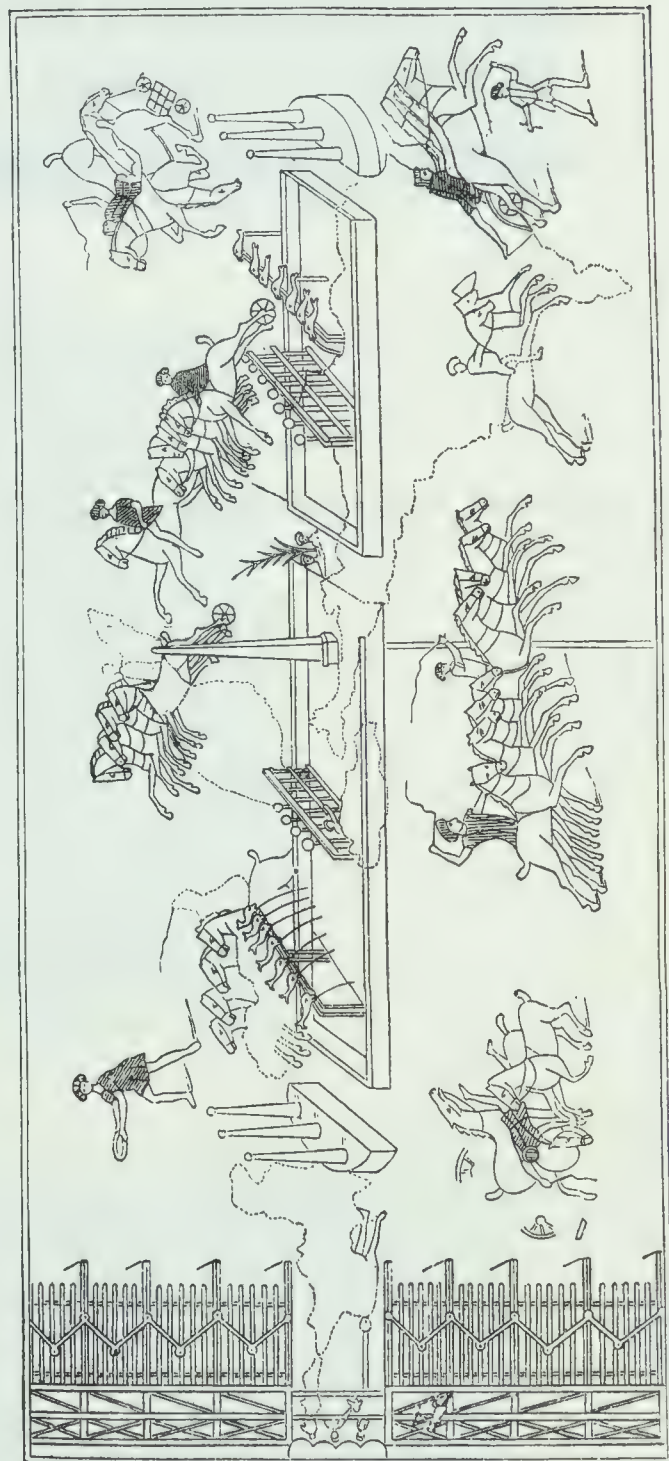


Figure 2.





## PLATE XI

Figure 1.

A relief from a sarcophagus, depicting a chariot race of Cupids. The metae, ova, and dolphins are evident. A ladder, used to facilitate the turning of the dolphins, may be seen against the platform supporting them.

Source: Johnston, op. cit., p. 273.

Figure 2.

A part of a mosaic illustrating the uniforms of the four factions of the Circus.

Source: Ibid., p. 277.

Figure 3.

A relief showing chariot racing.

Source: U. Paoli. Rome, op. cit., p. 224.



## PLATE XI



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.





## CHAPTER VII

### ATHLETIC CONTESTS

The athletic and musical contests of Greece were slow to win popular acclaim at Rome. They were not common under the Republic, but, with the gradual fusing of Roman and Greek cultures, they achieved greater popularity under the Empire. The first contest of this type was introduced in 186 B.C. by Marcus Flavius, when performers were introduced from Greece as part of a ten-day festival.<sup>1</sup> One hundred years later, Sulla, at his triumph over Mithridates in 81 B.C., exhibited athletes at Rome in such numbers that, at Olypmia, only foot-races could be held, for want of competitors in the other contests.<sup>2</sup> At Caesar's triumphal games in 46 B.C., the athletic contests lasted for three days, being conducted in a special stadium on the Campus Martius.<sup>3</sup> The feelings of most Romans at that time, however, is well illustrated by Cicero,<sup>4</sup> who, writing to Marcus Marius, says that the latter would hardly be keen on athletics, as he disliked even gladiators.

During the reigns of Augustus and Nero, athletic contests were

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<sup>1</sup>Livy op. cit. xxxix. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Ludwig Freidlander, Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire, trans. J. H. Freese and Leonard A. Magnus (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1965), II, 118.

<sup>3</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Julius 39.

<sup>4</sup>Letters to His Friends op. cit. vii. 1.



held more frequently. This led to a rise in the popularity of this type of competition. As a perpetual celebration of his victory at Actium, Augustus established the Actian Games, to be held every four years at Necropolis. These games were mainly gymnastic and musical contests, and athletes usually went to Necropolis following the Augustalia at Naples. The Actia became a fifth sacred contest of Greece, and, in the early Empire, dates were sometimes reckoned by Actiads as well as by Olympiads.<sup>5</sup> At Rome also, the victory was celebrated by a quadrennial festival of which athletic contests were a part, but these games were held only during the reign of Augustus, the last celebration being in A.D. 9.<sup>6</sup> Nero's quinquennial festival, Neronia, imitated the Greek pattern and included athletic events as well as chariot-racing, singing, music, poetry, and oratory.<sup>7</sup>

In A.D. 86, Domitian instituted the quinquennial Capitoline Games at Rome which ranked with the Olympian festivals. The events also followed the Greek system, and included a foot-race for girls.<sup>8</sup> An athlete named Titus Flavius Archibius won events in four successive Capitoline Olympiads (A.D. 94-106), the first time in the boys' pancratium, and the other three times in that of the men.<sup>9</sup> Dio<sup>10</sup> mentions that Aurelius Helix was victor-

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<sup>5</sup>Freidlander, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Nero 2.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. Domitian 4.

<sup>9</sup>Freidlander, op. cit., II, 121.

<sup>10</sup>Op. cit. lxxix. 10.





ious (in A.D. 218), both in the wrestling and in the boxing at the Capitoline Agon, a feat achieved by only seven champions since Hercules at Olympia, and at Rome by none before. By this time, athletics had achieved such a measure of popularity in Rome as to allow the continuation of the Capitoline Games throughout antiquity.

Professionalism amongst athletes must have contributed to the popularity of athletics during the later Empire. The Roman citizens were never greatly interested in participating individually in athletics but came to value it for its spectator appeal, and professional contests would best satisfy their demands for spectacle. Galen's contempt for professional athletes in his Exhortation to the Arts,<sup>11</sup> Philostratus' account of the decline of athletics and the buying of victories,<sup>12</sup> and Lucian's subtle appeal to the spirit of the early Greek athletic ideal<sup>13</sup>--all testify to the rise of professionalism, and subsequent corruption, in athletics. Agrippa advises Augustus against allowing cities to provide pensions for athletes, claiming that the games' prizes should be sufficient for the winners, while the rest should "follow some occupation that will be more profitable both to themselves and to the commonwealth."<sup>14</sup> Vitruvius

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<sup>11</sup>Cited in Robinson, op. cit., p. 191 ff.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Woody, "Philostratus: Concerning Gymnastics," Research Quarterly, VII (1936), 3 ff.

<sup>13</sup>Lucian Anacharis, A Discussion of Physical Training from The Works of Lucian of Samosata, trans. H. W. and F. C. Fowler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905) III, 190 ff.

<sup>14</sup>Dio op. cit. li. 29.



wonders why such prizes are not awarded to authors who "by information in their books prepare the minds of all to acquire knowledge."<sup>15</sup>

Pliny<sup>16</sup> writes to Trajan of athletic victors who claim their pension money from the time of their victory instead of from when they make their triumphal entry into their city. Apparently it was not unusual for an athlete's fame to extend to his ancestors, for Gallienus writes of Aelius Asclepiades who is to be exempted from all taxes and compulsory public services because he was the son of Nilus, the grandson of Asclepiades, both famous in the athletic world.<sup>17</sup>

There were several guilds of itinerant athletes, who appeared in municipal agones and festivals. In the second century, one of the principal guilds was the "Guild of athletes of the wreathed victors at the Sacred Games," who honoured Hercules.<sup>18</sup> This guild had its headquarters in Rome, and apparently its principal officer was sometimes given the position of director of the Imperial baths.<sup>19</sup> Antoninus gave them possession of the baths of Titus.<sup>20</sup>

Though athletes were well organized under the Empire, their growing popularity did not automatically ensure their being held in high esteem

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<sup>15</sup>Op. cit. ix. Preface.

<sup>16</sup>Letters op. cit. cxviii.

<sup>17</sup>Hermopolis Papyrus No. 119., cited in T. Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1936), II, 399.

<sup>18</sup>Freidlander, op. cit., II, 126. See also, Clarence E. Forbes "Ancient Athletic Guilds," Classical Philology, L (1955), 238 ff.

<sup>19</sup>See British Museum Papyrus No. 1178, cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., II, 232.

<sup>20</sup>Freidlander, loc. cit.





by many authors of the period. Seneca treats them with disdain: "How feather-brained are the athletes whose muscles and shoulders we admire." He is pleased to have some peace at last, for the games "have attracted all the bores to the boxing match."<sup>21</sup> Pliny<sup>22</sup> writes that during the defence of the abolition of gymnastic games in Vienna by Tribonius Rufinus, an assessor wished that they could be abolished at Rome also, as "the vices of our Viennenses are confined within their own walls; ours spread far and wide." Suetonius<sup>23</sup> mentions an epigram referring to one Marcus Marcellus, who had no talent, but merely "a pugilist's skill." On the other hand, Quintilian<sup>24</sup> in his advice to would-be orators, draws example from the trainer of athletics to illustrate the need for catering for individual differences and all-round performance.

Running and jumping, however, were recommended as a means of recreation. Martial<sup>25</sup> approves of Atticus' preference for running beside the Aqua Virgo rather than playing the various games in the city squares. Seneca recommends running as a good exercise for the studios. He also favours three types of jumping--the high jump, the broad jump, and leaping like the Salii, the priests of Mars--as beneficial to the scholar.<sup>26</sup> Swinging the weights has his approval,<sup>27</sup> though he is disturbed by the

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<sup>21</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. lxxx. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Letters op. cit. iv. 22.

<sup>23</sup>Op. cit. On Grammarians 22.

<sup>24</sup>Op. cit. ii. 8.

<sup>25</sup>Op. cit. vii. 32.

<sup>26</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. xv. 4.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.



person who exercises with them with much unnecessary grunting and wheezing.<sup>28</sup> Juvenal is contemptuous of the woman who frequents the gymnasium and whose arms are exhausted by swinging the heavy weights.<sup>29</sup>

References to boxing are fairly common in the literature, but unfortunately they give little information on the methods used in contests. Descriptions of boxing matches presented by the epic writers, Virgil<sup>30</sup> and Statius,<sup>31</sup> leave much to be desired, suggesting that neither writer was familiar with the "science" of the sport. Nonnus,<sup>32</sup> a fifth century writer in the Greek epic tradition, is more explicit, but probably in his era, brute strength was being supplemented with more scientific strategies. In all three epics, the bloody state of the loser affords evidence of a brutal form of contest. At this time, also, boxers were displaying their talents in the circus in opposition to those of the gladiators. One would therefore expect the Roman boxing-glove to be more of a weapon than that used by the Greeks.

The latter used long strips of leather which they wound around the knuckles, wrist, and forearm, "to prevent the fists from puffing and the arm from being broken, as it easily might in round or downward strokes."<sup>33</sup> The Romans developed from this the brutal caestus, or boxing-glove, a

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid. lvi. 1.

<sup>29</sup>Op. cit. vi. 246.

<sup>30</sup>Op. cit. v. 362 ff.

<sup>31</sup>Thebaid op. cit. vi. 671 ff.

<sup>32</sup>Op. cit. xxxvii. 491 ff. For further discussion on events and prizes in epic funeral games, see William H. Willis, "Athletic Contests in the Epic," TAPA, LXXII (1941), 392 ff.

<sup>33</sup>K. T. Frost, "Greek Boxing," Journal of Hellenic Studies, XXVI (1906), 214.





lethal weapon rather than a means of protection. Virgil<sup>34</sup> tells how Entellus presents "gloves of giant weight" constructed from "seven huge ox-hides all stiff with in-sewn lead and iron," and still "stained with blood and spattered brains." Frost's statement<sup>35</sup> that "boxing with loaded gloves is spurious sport, in which those only would engage who made it their trade for the pleasure of a brutal populace," brings out the basic difference between the two cultures of Greece and Rome, as applied to boxing as a sport.

References to wrestling testify to its common practice. Martial<sup>36</sup> speaks of the "well oiled" who "wrestle in the lists," and complains of wrestling masters who "make waste of oil." Suetonius<sup>37</sup> mentions there was bitter feeling towards Nero when, while there was famine at Rome, a ship arrived from Alexandria with a cargo of sand for the court wrestlers. Horace<sup>38</sup> is scornful of Sybaris for shunning the wrestling-oil "more warily than viper's blood" because of his infatuation with Lydia.

As one examines the literature of the period, it becomes apparent, however, that Greek athletics did not become an integral part of the Roman culture. The sport remained as something borrowed rather than inherited.

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<sup>34</sup>Op. cit. v. 400.

<sup>35</sup>Op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit. iii. 58.; iv. 19.

<sup>37</sup>Op. cit. Nero 45.

<sup>38</sup>Odes op. cit. i. 8.



## LITERARY REFERENCES

### A. ATHLETICS

Horace Odes i. 8.<sup>39</sup>

(On Sybaris' infatuation for Lydia) Why does he fear to touch the yellow Tiber? Why does he shun the wrestling-oil more warily than viper's blood, nor longer show his arms bruised with weapon practice, he who once was famed for hurling, oft the discus, oft the javelin, beyond the farthest mark?

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria ii. 8.<sup>40</sup>

Just as an expert gymnast, when he enters a gymnasium full of boys, after testing body and mind in every way, is able to decide for what class of athletic contest they should be trained. . . for nature when cultivated, goes from strength to strength, while he who runs counter to her bent is ineffective in those branches of the art for which he is less suited and weakens the talents which he seemed born to employ. . . . The teacher of rhetoric will distinguish such special aptitudes just as our gymnast will turn one pupil into a runner, another into a boxer or wrestler or an expert at some other of the athletic accomplishments for which prizes are awarded at the sacred games.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria vii. 3. 10.<sup>41</sup>

A horse whose flanks are compact is not only better to look upon, but swifter in speed. The athlete whose muscles have been formed by exercise is a joy to the eye, but he is also better fitted for the contests in which he must engage. In fact true beauty and usefulness always go hand in hand.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria ix. 4. 9.<sup>42</sup>

Why then should it be thought that polish is prejudicial to vigour, when the truth is that nothing can attain its full strength without the assistance of art, and that art is always productive of beauty? Is it not a fact that grace always goes with the highest

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<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 27.

<sup>40</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 265.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. III, 217.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. III, 511.





skill in throwing the spear, and that the truer the archer's aim, the more comely is his attitude? Again in fencing and all the contests of the wrestling school what one of all the tricks of attack and defence is there, that does not require movements and firmness of foot such as can only be acquired by art? Consequently in my opinion artistic structure gives force and direction to our thoughts just as the throwing-thong and the bow-string do to the spear and arrow.

Pliny Letters iv. 22.<sup>43</sup>

To Sempronius Rufus

I lately attended our excellent Emperor as one of his assessors in a cause wherein he himself presided. A certain person left by his will a fund for the establishment of gymnastic games at Vienna. These my worthy friend Trebonius Rufinus when he exercised the office of Duumvir, had ordered to be totally abolished; and it was now alleged that he had no official power to do so. He pleaded his own cause as successfully as eloquently; and what particularly recommended his speech was, that he delivered it with the deliberate gravity proper to a true Roman and a good citizen in dealing with a personal matter. When the sentiments of the assessors were taken, Junius Mauricus (who in resolution and integrity has no superior) pronounced that these games should not be restored to the people of Vienna; "and I would," added he, "that they could be abolished at Rome too!" . . .

. . . . It was determined these games should be suppressed which had greatly infected the manners of the people of Vienna; as they have universally had the same effect among us. But the vices of our Viennenses are confined within their own walls; ours spread far and wide;

#### B. FOOTRACE

Statius Thebaid vi. 555 ff.<sup>44</sup>

Then he incites those heroes who are speediest of foot to strive for ample rewards: a contest of agility where prowess is frailest, fit pursuit for peace, when sacred games invite, nor useless in war as a refuge should power of arm fail. . . Then they duly try their speed and sharpen up their paces, and by various arts and feigned

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<sup>43</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 337.

<sup>44</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 101. The athletes take the time to warm up before the race.





excitement stir their languid limbs; now they sink down with bended knees, now smite with loud claps their slippery breasts, now ply their fiery feet in short sprint and sudden stop.

As soon as the bar fell, and left the threshold level, they nimbly dashed away and the naked forms gleamed upon the plain.

Silius Italicus Punica xvi. 457 ff.<sup>45</sup>

When this was over,<sup>46</sup> Scipio summoned competitors for the glad-some foot-race, and offered prizes to heighten their zeal. "The winner," he said, "shall receive this helmet in which Hastrubal terrified the armies of Spain; and the second in the race shall carry off this sword which my father took from the dead body of Hyempsa; and lastly a bull shall console the runner who comes in third. The other bold competitors shall each receive a pair of the javelins that the Spanish mines supply, and shall depart content. . . ."

There they stood on tiptoe, bending forwards, with hearts beating high in the passion for renown; and, when the trumpet gave the signal to start, they sprang forward through the air swifter than arrows launched from the string. The spectators shouted, each zealous for his own favourite; hanging on tiptoe, with hoarse cries they called by name to the runner of their choice. The band of noble youths swept over the plain, leaving no print of their feet on the sand as they passed. All alike were young and fair of face; all were fleet of foot and deserved to win.

When half the distance was reached, Erytus shot to the front, and kept ahead of the rest, not by much, but still ahead. Hard behind him came bold Hesperus, no slower than the other, and planted his foremost foot in the heel-marks of the leader. Erytus was content to be in front; for Hesperus the hope that he might yet get in front was sufficient. Therefore they increased their activity, and their bodies were driven forward by their spirit; even their exertions add to their youthful comeliness. But see, Theron, who was last of the seven and running with little effort, now felt that he had gathered sufficient strength: rising to his full height, he took all by surprise, putting forth in a sudden burst all the power he had been husbanding, and leaving all the winds behind him. It might have been Mercury himself, flying through the sky with his winged sandals fastened to his feet. The onlookers marvelled, as he passed one and then another, till he who had just before been last became the third in the order of the runners and pressed fiercely upon the track of

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<sup>45</sup>Op. cit. Loeb Ed. II, 419.

<sup>46</sup>The chariot race.





Hesperus. And not only the lad in front of him but Eurytus himself, first favourite for the prize, was dismayed by such a display of swiftness. Fourth in order came Tartessus; but all his efforts were in vain, if the three others kept their respective distances; he followed his brother, but Theron came between them. Theron's patience was at an end: with one fiery burst he flew over the course and passed Hesperus, who was filled with rage. One rival remained; and the sight of the goal close at hand goaded on their weary limbs; for one short struggle--Theron exhausted by his effort, and Eurytus by the fear that crept into his heart. And perhaps they would have reached the goal together and shared the first prize; but Hesperus, coming behind Theron, in his fierce anger grasped the hair that spread loosely over Theron's snow-white neck, and tugged at it. When his rival was hampered thus Eurytus passed on in joy and triumph and flew to receive the prize of victory.

### C. JAVELIN THROWING

Seneca Epistulae Morales xciv. 3.<sup>47</sup>

Just as the student of javelin throwing keeps aiming at a fixed target and thus trains the hand to give direction to the missile, and when, by instruction and practice, he has gained the desired ability, he can then employ it against any target he wishes (having learned to strike not any random object, but precisely the object at which he has aimed). . . .

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<sup>47</sup> Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 13. This points again to the practicality of the Roman mind, in that javelin throwing should have a purpose, for example, throwing at a target rather than throwing for distance. The javelin throw at the funeral games described by Silius Italicus in Punica xvi. 557 ff., also consists of throwing at a mark. Javelin throwing was considered important for hunting and warfare. In the agones, however, it is assumed that the Greek javelin was thrown, that is, throwing for distance by using the amentum.





## D. THROWING THE DISCUS

Statius Thebaid vi. 671 ff.<sup>48</sup>

Phlegyas of Pisa begins the toil; straightway he drew all eyes upon himself, when they beheld his frame, such promise of great deeds was there. And first with earth he roughens the quoit<sup>49</sup> and his own hand, then shaking off the dust turns it right skilfully to see which side best suits his fingers, or fits more surely the middle of his arm. This sport had he ever loved, not only when he attended his country's famous festival, but he was wont to reckon the space between Alpheos' either bank, and, where they are most widely distant, to clear the river nor ever wet the disk. At once, then, confident of his powers he measures, not the rough acres of the plain, but the sky's expanse with his right arm, and with either knee bent earthward he gathers up his strength and whirls the disk above him and hides it in the clouds. Swiftly it speeds aloft, and as though falling grows faster as it mounts; at last exhausted it falls to earth more slowly from the height, and buries itself in the field. . . . The Danaï shout applause, though amid thy frowns Hippomedon, and he hopes for a mightier throw along the level.<sup>50</sup>

But thereupon Fortune, whose pleasure it is to dash immoderate hopes, assails him; what power has man against the gods? Already he was preparing a mighty throw, his head was turned and all his side turned back: the weight slipped and fell before his feet and baffled his throw, and his hand dropped empty and unavailing. All groaned, while to a few the sight brought pleasure. Menestheus then, more cautious, brings careful skill to the attempt, and uttering many a prayer to thee, O son of Maia, corrects with dust the slippery surface of the powerful mass. With far better fortune it speeds from his huge hand, nor falls till it has covered no mean extent of the course. They applaud, and an arrow is fixed to mark the spot. Third, Hippomedon with slow and ponderous step advances to the labours of the contest; for deep in his heart he takes warning from the fate of Phlegyas and the good fortune of Menestheus. He lifts the instrument of combat that his hand knew so well, and holding it aloft summons up the strength of his unyielding side and vigorous arms,

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<sup>48</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 109.

<sup>49</sup>Mozley, the translator, says, "I have translated the word (discus, -i m.) both 'quoit' and 'disk' though the discus, a plate of iron or stone about 10 or 12 inches in diameter, was very different from our quoit, which is a ring."

<sup>50</sup>Phlegyas' first throw is a practice-throw, upwards, instead of "along the level." He now prepares for his abortive official attempt.





and flings it with a mighty whirl, springing forward after it himself. With a terrific bound the quoit flies through the empty air, and even in its flight remembers the hand that flung it and keeps to its due path, nor attains a doubtful or a neighbouring goal as it passes the defeated Menestheus, but far beyond the rival sign it falls to earth.

## E. BOXING AND WRESTLING

Horace Epistles ii. 1.<sup>51</sup>

Often even the bold poet is frightened to put to rout, when those who are stronger in number, but weaker in worth and rank, unlearned and stupid and ready to fight it out if the knights dispute with them, call in the middle of a play for a bear or for boxers; 'tis in such things the rabble delights.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lxxviii. 16.<sup>52</sup>

What blows do athletes receive on their faces and all over their bodies! Nevertheless, through their desire for fame they endure every torture, and they undergo these things not only because they are fighting but in order to be able to fight. Their very training means torture.

Seneca Epistulae Morales lxxx. 2 f.<sup>53</sup>

Today I have some free time, thanks not so much to myself as to the games, which have attracted all the bores to the boxing match. . . .

. . . . For lo, a great cheer comes from the stadium, and while it does not drive me distracted, yet it shifts my thoughts to a contrast suggested by this very noise. How many men, I say to myself, train their bodies, and how few train their minds! What crowds flock to the games,--spurious as they are and arranged merely for pastime,--and what a solitude reigns where the good arts are taught! How feather-brained are the athletes whose muscles and shoulders we admire! The question which I ponder most of all is this: if the body can be trained to such a degree of endurance that it will stand the blows and kicks of several opponents at once, and to such a degree that a man can last out the day and resist the scorching sun in the

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<sup>51</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 413.

<sup>52</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 191.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 213.



midst of the burning dust, drenched all the while in his own blood,--if this can be done, how much more easily might the mind be toughened so that it could receive the blows of Fortune and not be conquered, so that it might struggle to its feet again after it has been laid low, after it has been trampled under foot?

For although the body needs many things in order to be strong, yet the mind grows from within, giving itself nourishment and exercise. Yonder athletes must have copious food, copious drink, copious quantities of oil, and long training besides; but you can acquire virtue without equipment and without expense.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria ii. 8.<sup>54</sup>

The skilled gymnast will once again provide us with a parallel: if he undertakes to train a pancratiast,<sup>55</sup> he will not merely teach him how to use his fists and his heels nor will he restrict his instructions to the holds in wrestling, giving special attention to tricks of this kind, but will train him in every department of the science. Some will no doubt be incapable of attaining proficiency in certain exercises; these must specialize in those which lie within their powers. For there are two things which he must be most careful to avoid: first, he must not attempt the impossible, secondly he must not switch off his pupil from what he can do well to exercises for which he is less well suited. But if his pupil is like the famous Nicostratus, whom we saw when he was old and we were boys, he will train him equally in every department of the science and will make him a champion both in boxing and wrestling, like Nicostratus himself who won the prize for both contests within a few days of each other.

Martial Epigrams xiv. 50.<sup>56</sup>

Galericulum (A small cap)

That the wrestler's dirty oil may not soil your sleek locks, you may cover your moist hair with this skin cap.

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<sup>54</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 269.

<sup>55</sup>The pancratium was a mixture of wrestling and boxing. See E. Norman Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 212 ff.

<sup>56</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 457. The small skull-cap was worn with the fur outside.





Martial Epigrams xiv. 201.<sup>57</sup>

I do not like him because he wins, but because he knows how to yield and learned the better art of recovering himself.

Suetonius Augustus 45.<sup>58</sup>

He was especially given to watching boxers, particularly those of Latin birth, not merely such as were recognized and classed as professionals, whom he was wont to match even with Greeks, but the common untrained townspeople who fought rough and tumble and without skill in the narrow streets. In fine, he honoured with his keen interest all classes of performers who took part in the public shows; maintained the privileges of the athletes and even increased them; forbade the matching of gladiators without the right of appeal for quarter; and deprived the magistrates of the power allowed them by an ancient law of punishing actors anywhere and everywhere, restricting it to the times of games and to the theatre. Nevertheless he exacted the severest discipline in the contests in the wrestling halls and the combats of the gladiators.

Suetonius On Grammarians 22.<sup>59</sup>

On Marcus Marcellus, a critic of the latin language.

That he had formerly been a boxer is shown by this epigram which Asinius Pollio made upon him:

'He who learned 'Head to the left' explains to us difficult language: Talent indeed he has none, merely a pugilist's skill.'

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus vi. 20.<sup>60</sup>

Suppose that a competitor in the ring has gashed us with his nails and butted us violently with his head, we do not protest or take it amiss or suspect our opponent in future of foul play. Still we do keep an eye on him, not indeed as an enemy, or from suspicion of him, but with good humoured avoidance.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 509.

<sup>58</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 199.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 429.

<sup>60</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 141.





## F. A BOXING CONTEST

Virgil Aeneid v. 362 ff.<sup>61</sup>

Then when the races were ended and the gifts assigned, "Now," he cries, "whoso hath valour in his breast and a stout heart, let him come and lift up his arms with hidebound hands." So he speaks and sets forth a double prize for the fray; for the victor, a steer decked with gold and fillets; a sword and noble helmet to console the vanquished. Forthwith without pause, Dares shows himself in all his huge strength, rising amid a mighty murmuring of the throng--Dares, who alone was wont to face Paris: 'twas he who by the mound, where great Hector lies, smote the champion Butes, offspring of Amycus' Bebrycian race, as he strode forward in his huge bulk, and stretched him on the yellow sand. Such was Dares, who at once raises his head high for the fray, displays his broad shoulders, stretches his arms, spars right and left, and lashes the air with blows. For him a match is sought; but none from all that throng durst face him or draw the gloves onto his hands. So, exultant and thinking all resign the prize, he stood before Aeneas' feet; then, tarrying no longer, grasps the bull's horn in his left hand, speaking thus: "Goddess-born, if no man dare trust himself to the fray, what end shall there be to my standing? How long is it fitting to keep me waiting? Bid me lead off thy gift!" Therewith all the Dardans shouted applause, and bade the promised prize be duly given him.

At this Acestes sternly chides Entellus, as he sat next to him on the green couch of grass: "Entellus, once bravest of heroes, though in vain, will thou so tamely let gifts so great be carried off without a struggle? Where now, pray, is that divine teacher, Eryx, idly famed? Where thy renown over all Sicily, and those spoils hanging in thy house?" Thereon he: "Tis not that love of fame is gone, or pride routed by fear; but my blood is chilled and dulled by sluggish age, and my stretch of body is numb and lifeless. Had I that which once I had, that in which yonder braggart boldly exults--had I now that youth, then not from lure of prize or goodly steer had I come forward, nor care I for gifts!" So he spoke and thereon threw into the ring a pair of gloves of giant weight, wherewith valiant Eryx was wont to enter contests, binding his arms with the tough hide. Amazed were the hearts of all, so vast were the seven huge ox-hides, all stiff with insewn lead and iron. Above all Dares himself is dazed, and, shrinking back, declines the contest; while Anchises' noble son turns this way and that the thongs' huge and ponderous folds. Then the old man spoke thus from his breast: "What if any had seen the gloves and arms of Hercules himself, and the fatal feud on this very shore? These arms thy brother Eryx once wore; thou seest them yet stained with blood and spattered brains. With these he

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<sup>61</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 471 ff.





faced great Alcides; with these was I wont to fight, while sounder blood gave me strength, nor yet has envious age sprinkled my temples with snow. But if the Trojan Dares declines these our arms, and this is resolved on by good Aeneas and approved by my patron Acestes, let him make the battle even. At thy wish I waive the gauntlets of Eryx; dismiss thy fears; and do thou doff thy Trojan gloves!" So speaking, from his shoulders he threw back his two-fold cloak, stripped his great joints and limbs, his great bones and thews, and stood a giant in the arena's midst.

Then, with a father's care, the seed of Anchises brought out gloves of like weight and with equal weapons bound the hands of both. Straightway each took his stand, poised on tiptoe, and, undaunted, lifted his arms high in the air. Raising their heads high and drawing them far back from blows, they spar, hand with hand, and provoke the fray, the one nimbler of foot and confident in his youth, the other mighty in massive limbs; yet his slow knees totter and tremble, and a painful gasping shakes his huge frame. Many hard blows they launch at each other idly, many they rain on hollow flank, while their chests ring loudly; hands play oft about ears and brows, and cheeks rattle under the hard blows. Solidly stands Entellus, motionless, unmoved, with selfsame poise, shunning blows with body and watchful eyes alone. The other, like one who assails with siege-works some high city or besets a mountain stronghold in arms, tries this entrance and now that, skilfully ranges over all the ground, and presses with varied but vain assaults. Then Entellus, rising, put forth his right, lifted high; the other speedily foresaw the down-coming blow and, slipping aside with nimble body, foiled it. Entellus spent his strength on air, yea, and in his huge bulk this mighty man fell in his might to earth, as at times falls on Erymanthus or mighty Ida a hollow pine, upturned by the roots! Eagerly the Teucrians and men of Sicily rise up; a shout mounts to heaven, and first Acestes runs forward, and in pity raises his aged friend from the ground. But neither downcast nor dismayed by the fall, the hero returns keener to the fray, and rouses violence with wrath. Shame, too, and conscious valour kindle his strength, and in fury he drives Dares headlong over the whole arena redoubling his blows, now with the right hand, and now, lo! with the left. No stint, no stay is there,--thick as the hail when storm clouds rattle on the roof, so thick are the blows from either hand as the hero oft beats and batters Dares.

Then father Aeneas suffered not their fury to go farther, nor Entellus to rage in bitterness of soul, but set an end to the fray and rescued the sore-spent Dares, speaking thus in soothing words: "Unhappy man! How could such frenzy seize thy mind? Seest thou not the strength is another's and the gods are changed? Yield to heaven!" He spoke, and with his voice broke off the fight. But Dares his loyal mates lead to the ships, his feeble knees trailing, his head swaying from side to side, while he spat from his mouth clotted gore and teeth mangled with blood. At summons, they receive the helmet and the sword; the palm and the bull they leave to Entellus.





## G. ATHLETIC PERFORMANCES

Pliny Natural History vii. 20.<sup>62</sup>

Varro in his account of cases of remarkable strength records that one Tritanus, famous in the gladiatorial exercise with the Samnite equipment, was slightly built but of exceptional strength, and that his son, a soldier of Pompey the Great, had a chequered criss-cross of sinews all over his body, even in his arms and hands; and moreover once he challenged one of the enemy to single combat, defeated him without a weapon in his hand, and finally took hold of him with a single finger and carried him off to the camp. Vinnius Valens served as captain in the Imperial Guard of the late lamented Augustus; he was in the habit of holding carts laden with wine sacks up in the air until they were emptied, and of catching hold of wagons with one hand and stopping them by throwing his weight against the efforts of the teams drawing them, and doing other marvellous exploits which can be seen carved on his monument. Marcus Varro likewise states: 'Rusticelius, who was nick-named Hercules, used to lift his mule; Fifius Salvius used to walk up a ladder with two hundred-pound weights fastened to his feet, the same weights in his hands, and two hundred-pound weights on his shoulders.' We also saw a man called Athanatus, who was capable of a miraculous display: he walked across the stage wearing a leaden breast-plate weighing 500 pounds and shod in boots of 500 pounds' weight. When the athlete Milo took a firm stand, no one could make him shift his footing, and when he was holding an apple no one could make him straighten out a finger.

Pliny Natural History vii. 20.<sup>63</sup>

Phidippides's running the 130 miles from Athens to Sparta in two days was a mighty feat, until the Spartan runner Anystis and Alexander the Great's courier Philonides ran the 148 miles from Sicyon to Elis in a day. At the present day indeed we are aware that some men can last out 128 miles in the Circus, and that recently in the consulship of Fonteius and Vipstanus a boy of eight ran 68 miles between noon and evening. The marvellous nature of this feat will only get across to us in full measure if we reflect that Tiberius Nero completed by carriage the longest twenty-four hours' journey on record when hastening to Germany to his brother Drusus who was ill: this measured 182 miles.

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<sup>62</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 559.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 561.





Dio Roman History lxxix. 10.<sup>64</sup>

(A.D. 219) Sardanapalus was conducting games and numerous spectacles in which Aurelius Helix, the athlete, won renown. This man so far surpassed his competitors, that he desired to contend in both wrestling and the pancratium at Olympia, and actually did win in both events at Ludi Capitolini. But the Eleans were jealous of him, fearing that he might prove to be "the eighth from Hercules," as the saying has it, and so would not call any wrestler into the stadium, even though they announced this contest on the bulletin-board; in Rome, however, he won both events, a feat that no one had accomplished.

IGRR IV 1519.<sup>65</sup>

Marcus Aurelius Demostratus Damas, citizen of Sardis, Alexandria, Antinoöpolis, Nicomedia, Tralles, Ephesus, Smyrna, Miletus, Pergamum, Corinth, Athens, Argus, Lacedaemon, Delphi, and Elis, won a total of 100 (plus) events, including 68 at sacred iselastic games, in Italy, Greece, Asia, and Alexandria, to wit: in the Olympic Games at Pisa (in Greece) . . . ; in the Pythian at Delphi, 3; in the Capitoline Games at Rome, 2; at Puteoli, 2; at Naples . . . ; in the Actian Games, 2; at Athens, 10 (Panathenaea . . . ; Panhellenia, 3; Olympea. . . ; Hadrianea, 1); at Rhodes in the Halian Games, 3; at Sardis in the Chrysanthine, 4; at Ephesus, 9; at Smyrna, 6; at Pergamum in the Augustan Games, 3; at Alexandria. . . . At Rome in the Victory Games of the lords Emperors Antoninus and Commodus he was crowned with a golden crown and took a gold prize. He requested and obtained from our lords the most divine Emperors Severus and Antoninus the succession of his sons to his high-priesthood and athletic-meet presidencies.

The statue was erected by his sons, Aurelius Damas, high priest of athletic meets everywhere, life-time athletic-meet president, and overseer of imperial baths, many-time winner, star performer; Marcus Demostratianus, many-time winner, star performer; and Damianus, athletic-meet president. . . .

He was the first and only one of men of all time to win twenty events for juveniles at sacred games and forty-eight events at sacred games after advancing from youth to manhood, including the boxing contest in the Pythian Games at Delphi, in the Isthmian, in the Nemean, and in the Hadrianic Philadelphian at Alexandria. He was honoured by

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<sup>64</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. IX, 459.

<sup>65</sup>Cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., II, 234. This inscription is cut on the base of a statue which was erected to a star athlete in the stadium of his native city of Sardis. Inscriptions in his honour have been found also at Delphi, Ephesus, and Rome.





the deified Marcus and the deified Commodus with full-fledged Alexandrine citizenship and with the following athletic-meet presidencies: of the Capitoline Games at Rome, of the Chrysanthine at Sardis, of the League of Asia at Sardis, of the Didyman at Miletus, of the Hadrianic Philadelphian at Alexandria, of the Augustan at Alexandria, of the Seleucan at Alexandria, of the games at Antinoöpolis and all games in Egypt, of the League of Asia at Tralles, of the League of Bithynia at Nicomedia, of the Euryclean at Lacadaemon; and he was honoured by the deified Severus and our lord the most divine Emperor Antoninus with many other great honours and with the athletic-meet presidencies of the Pian Games at Puteoli and of the Augustan Games at Naples.

## H. AWARDS AND PENSIONS

Vitruvius De Architectura ix. Preface.<sup>66</sup>

Famous sportsmen who win victories at Olympia, Corinth and Nemea, have been assigned such great distinctions by the ancestors of the Greeks that they not only receive praise publicly at the games, as they stand with palm and crown, but also when they go back victorious to their own people they ride triumphant with their four-horse chariots into their native cities, and enjoy a pension for life from the State. When I observe this, I am surprised that similar or even greater distinctions are not assigned to those authors who confer infinite benefits on mankind throughout the ages. For this is the more worthy of enactment, in that while sportsmen make their bodies stronger, authors not only cultivate their own perceptions, but by the information in their books prepare the minds of all to acquire knowledge and thus to stimulate their talents.

Pliny Letters cxviii.<sup>67</sup>

To the Emperor Trajan

The athletic victors, Sir, in the iselastic games,<sup>68</sup> think they

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<sup>66</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 197.

<sup>67</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 427.

<sup>68</sup>These games entitled the victors to make a triumphal entry into their native cities, in a chariot of state, which was driven through a breach in the walls made for the occasion. These honours were originally confined to victors at the four great Hellenic games (the Olympia, Pythia, Isthmia, Nemea); but in Imperial times apparently, any games could become, or cease to be iselastic at the Emperor's pleasure. Victors had always received a pension, or free maintenance for life from their cities; Trajan had increased these allowances.





ought to receive the pension you have established for the conquerors at those combats from the day they were crowned: for it is not at all material, they say, when they may be triumphantly conducted into their city, but when they merit that honour by their conquest. I habitually countersign the drafts for payment with the words "under the head of iselastic money," so that I am strongly inclined to believe that the time of their public entry is to be alone considered. They likewise petition to be allowed the pension you give at those combats which you have made iselastic, though they were conquerors before that establishment took place: for it is but reasonable, they assert, that they should receive their rewards in this case, as they are deprived of them at those games which have been divested of the honour of being iselastic since their victories. But I am extremely doubtful whether a retrospect should be admitted in this case, and a reward given to which they had no right at the time they gained the victory. I beg therefore you would be pleased to direct my judgement in these points, by explaining the intention of your benefactions.

Pliny Letters cxix.<sup>69</sup>

Trajan to Pliny

The reward proposed to the conqueror in the iselastic games, is not, I think due till he makes his public entry into his city. Nor at those combats which I have thought proper to make iselastic, ought pensions to be extended backwards to those who conquered there before the alteration took place. Nor is it a point in their favour that they have ceased to receive the emolument for those games which subsequent to their victories I have ordained are not to be iselastic; since, notwithstanding any change which has been made relating to these games, they are not called upon to return the recompense which they received prior to such alteration.

Dio Roman History li. 29.<sup>70</sup>

(Agrippa to Caesar Augustus, 29 B.C.) . . . and as for the competitors in the games, the prizes which are offered in each event are enough, unless a man wins in the Olympian or Pythian Games or in some contest here in Rome. For these are the only victors who ought to receive their maintenance, and then the cities will not be wearing themselves out to no purpose nor will any athlete go into training except those who have a chance of winning; the rest will be able to follow some occupation that will be more profitable both to themselves and to the commonwealth.

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid. Loeb Ed. II, 429.

<sup>70</sup>Op. cit. Loeb Ed. VI, 153.





Hermopolis Papyrus No. 119.<sup>71</sup>

The Emperor Caesar Publius Licinius GALLIENUS Pius Augustus to Aurelius Plutio, greeting. You acted rightly and properly in taking care of the orphan child and in writing to me concerning him. The dictates of justice as well as the considerations which you urge in your request bid me to grant the favour readily. For, since his grandfather was Asclepiades and his father Nilus, men who are famous in the athletic world, how could it fail to be in order for him to obtain everything (?) readily? Accordingly, Aelius Asclepiades, also known as Nilus, is to be exempted from all taxes(?), offices, and compulsory public services, so that he may enjoy the benefit of my grant because of the fame of his ancestors.

I. CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE ATHLETE'S GUILD<sup>72</sup>British Museum Papyrus No. 1178.<sup>73</sup>

(A.D. 194) Tiberius CLAUDIUS Caesar Augustus Germanicus Sarmaticus, pontifex maximus, holding the tribunical power for the sixth year, designated consul for the fourth time, acclaimed imperator twelve times, father of his country, to the Travelling Athletes' Guild, greeting. The gold crown sent me by you on the occasion of my victory over the Britons I received gladly as constituting a token of your loyalty to me. The envoys (bringing the crown) were Tiberius Claudius Cyrus, and Dio son of Miccalus, citizen of Antioch. Farewell.

Tiberius CLAUDIUS Caesar Augustus Germanicus Sarmaticus, pontifex maximus, holding the tribunical power for the seventh year, consul six times, acclaimed imperator eighteen times, father of his country, to the Travelling Athletes' Guild Dedicated to Hercules, greeting. In two resolutions transmitted to me simultaneously you informed (?) me that Gaius Julius Antiochus, king of Commagene, and Julius Polemo, king of Pontus, my esteemed friends, were treated by you with all zeal and regard when they were holding the games instituted by them in my name. I was pleased with you for your service to them, and I was made cognizant of--though I was not surprised at--their good will towards myself

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<sup>71</sup>An imperial grant of immunity to a descendant of victors in athletic contests, dated A.D. 266, cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., II, 399.

<sup>72</sup>The certificate proper, signed by various guild and meet officials, is preceded by the texts of three imperial rescripts, which are recited as evidence of the favour which earlier emperors accorded the guild.

<sup>73</sup>Cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., II, 232.





and their considerations concerning you. Those inscribed in the resolutions were: Diogenes son of Miccalus, citizen of Antioch, who has just recently made me high priest of the guild, and whom I also deemed worthy, together with his two daughters, of Roman citizenship; Sando- genes son of . . .; and Dio (?) son of Miccalus, citizen of Antioch. Farewell.

The Emperor Caesar VESPASIAN Augustus to the Sacred Travelling Athletes' Guild Dedicated to Hercules, greeting. Knowing the high re- pute and distinction of you athletes, I too propose to preserve all the privileges granted you by Claudius at your request. Farewell.

The Sacred Hadrianic Antoninian Septimian Travelling Athletes' Guild Dedicated to Hercules and the presider-over-games and the Emperor Caesar Lucius SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS Pertinax Augustus, to the members of the said guild, greeting. Know ye that Herminus, also known as Morus, from Hermopolis, boxer, about . . . years old, is a fellow member of our guild and has paid the entire regulation initiation fee of 100 denarii in full. We have therefore written to you, so that you may be informed. Farewell.

Done at Naples, Italy, at the forty-ninth quadrennial performance of the great Augustan Italian Roman Games, in the consulship of Lucius SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS Pertinax Augustus (for the second time), and Claudius Septimus Albinus Caesar (for the second time), September 23, the follow- ing being high priests of athlete-meets everywhere, life-time athletic- meet presidents, and overseers of imperial baths: Marcus Aurelius Demonstratus Damas, citizen of Sardis, Alexandria, Antino<sup>o</sup>polis, Athens, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Nicomedia, Miletus, Lacedaemon, and Tralles, pancratiast, twice clean-sweep winner, undefeated boxing champion, star performer, and Marcus Aurelius Demetrius, citizen of Alexandria, of Hermopolis, pancratiast, clean-sweep-winner, wrestler, star performer, and Marcus Aurelius Chrysippus . . . citizen of Smyrna, of Alexandria, wrestler, clean-sweep winner, star performer; the life-time president officiating at the meet being Marcus Aurelius Demetrius, high priest and overseer of imperial baths; the presidents of the guild being Alex- ander II son of Athenodorus, citizen of Myra and Ephesus, wrestler, pan- cratiast, star performer; the treasurer being C . . . ctabenus son of Proclus, citizen of Ephesus, trainer, star performer; the secretary of the guild being Publius Aelius Euctemo, chief secretary of the meet.

(Signatures) I, Alexander II, also known as Athenodorus, citizen of Myra and Ephesus, wrestler, pancratiast, victor in the Pythian, Augustan, and Halian Games, star performer, president of the Sacred Athletes' Guild hereby certify that Herminus, also known as Morus, from Hermopolis, boxer, was elected to membership in my presence in Naples, Italy, at the forty-ninth quadrennial celebration.

I, C . . . ctabenus son of Proclus, citizen of . . ., of Ephesus, trainer, clean-sweep winner, twice (proclaimed) best of the Greeks,





treasurer of the sacred guild, hereby certify that Herminus, also known as Morus, from Hermopolis, boxer, was elected to membership in my presence in Naples, Italy, at the forty-ninth quadrennial celebration.

I, Marcus Aurelius Demetrius, high priest of athletic-meets everywhere, life-time athletic-meet president, overseer of imperial baths, pancratiast, clean-sweep winner, wrestler, star performer, hereby certify in Naples that Herminus, also known as Morus, from Hermopolis, boxer, was elected to membership in my presence at the forty-ninth quadrennial celebration.

I, Publius Aelius Euctemo, chief secretary of the meet, executed this document as secretary of the guild.

## J. ATTITUDES TO WOMEN

Juvenal Satires vi. 246.<sup>74</sup>

Why need I tell of the purple wraps and the wrestling-oils used by women? Who has not seen one of them smiting a stump, piercing it through and through with a foil, lunging at it with a shield, and going through all the proper motions?--a matron truly qualified to blow a trumpet at the Floralia!<sup>75</sup> . . . . What modesty can you expect in a woman who wears a helmet, abjures her own sex, and delights in feats of strength?

Suetonius Augustus 44.<sup>76</sup>

As for the contests of the athletes, he excluded women from them so strictly, that when a contest between a pair of boxers had been called for at the games in honour of his appointment as pontifex maximus, he postponed it until early the following day, making proclamation that it was his desire that women should not come to the theatre before the fifth hour.

Dio Roman History lxxv. 16.<sup>77</sup>

(A.D. 200, Severus) There took place also during those days a

<sup>74</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 103.

<sup>75</sup>Games in honour of Flora (April 28-May 3), at which much female licence was allowed.

<sup>76</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 197.

<sup>77</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. IX, 235.





gymnastic contest, at which so great a multitude of athletes assembled, under compulsion, that we wondered how the course could contain them all. And in this contest women took part, vying with one another most fiercely, with the result that jokes were made about other very distinguished women as well. Therefore it was henceforth forbidden for any woman, no matter what her origin, to fight in single combat.

#### K. GALEN ON ATHLETICS AS A PROFESSION

Galen Exhortation to the Arts 9 ff.<sup>78</sup>

Come now, young men, as many of you as have heard my words, enthusiastically set about the learning of an art, so that no swindler or imposter may ever mislead you or teach you a useless or degrading trade; you know, of course, that those pursuits which do not have the betterment of life as their ultimate aim are not arts. I am quite sure that you do realize about most pursuits, such as tumbling and whirling in a circle without becoming dizzy, like the performances of Myrmecidas the Athenian and of Callicrates the Spartan, that they are not arts at all. But only of athletics am I mistrustful, for I fear that this pursuit may trick some young man into preferring it to some art--promising as it does, physical strength, assuring glory with the crowd, and the honour of daily grants of money from the public treasury exactly like war heroes. Therefore we had better investigate this occupation in advance; a person is easily deceived in what he has not properly investigated.

Now all the blessings in nature can be divided into mental, physical, and worldly, and no other variety can be thought of besides these. That athletes have never shared in even a dream of mental blessings is clear to anyone. Why, in the first place, they don't even know whether they have a mind, so far do they fall short of understanding reason itself. Always accumulating a quantity of flesh and blood, they keep their minds quenched in mire, unable to do any accurate thinking and witless like dumb beasts.

Perhaps then they would claim that athletes attain some of the physical blessings. I wonder, will they lay claim to the most prized one, health? But you could not find any other people in a more dangerous physical condition, that is if we are to believe Hippocrates when he said: "The perfect condition which these fellows strive for is

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<sup>78</sup>Cited in Robinson, op. cit., p. 191 ff. Galen should be forgiven for the harsh tone of this essay for it was no doubt the out-pouring of a heart embittered by the exalted position of athletes in the courts of Marcus Aurelius and of Commodus where he served. As a competent doctor, he must also have been irritated by the medical brashness of athletic coaches who imposed on their students unnatural rules of living.





dangerous." And indeed, the following: "To keep well avoid too much food, too little toil," is one of Hippocrates apt statements which everyone likes. But athletes practise the reverse of this, overexerting, over-stuffing, acting like frenzied Corybantes, and wholly disregarding the words of that man of old. For Hippocrates suggested as a health programme: "Work, food, drink, sleep, love--all in moderation." Yet athletes toil at their exercises every day beyond what is seemly and they cram in their food by force, often prolonging their meal until midnight.

Corresponding to their other practises, their sleep is immoderate, too. For when people who lead normal lives are coming home from work, hungry, then these athletes are just getting up from sleep. Hence their mode of life resembles that of swine, but with this exception, that swine do not overexercise or force themselves to eat, whereas athletes do have just these experiences, and at times their backs are torn by the laurel.

Now the ancient Hippocrates, in addition to what I quoted before, also says this: "Excessive or sudden emptying or filling or warming or chilling or otherwise stirring the body is dangerous," and he adds, "Any excess is hostile to nature." But athletes give no ear to these utterances, nor to the others which they transgress, though he stated them clearly, but their practices are all directly the opposite of his health doctrines. And for this reason I should say that their regimen is a practice for illness not for health. This, I think, was Hippocrates' belief when he said: "A permanently healthy state is better than the unnatural condition of athletes." By what he said, not only did he show that their mode of life is contrary to nature but he did not call their condition (diathesis), a permanent state (hexis), thereby taking away from them even the designating word by which all the ancients designate all who are really well. For "hexis" means a lasting "diathesis" and one hard to alter, whereas the perfect condition of athletes is dangerous and subject to change. Because of being perfect it has no room for improvement, and because of being unable to remain the same, or even stationary, it has left only the down grade. Such is their physical condition while competing, but when they have retired it surely is much worse. Some die shortly, some live longer but do not reach old age.

Just as walls once shaken by siege engines readily collapse at some chance disaster, unable to resist an earthquake or any other shock a little serious, so athletes' bodies, unsound and weak from blows received in practice, are liable to injury at any chance incident. Eyes that have often been gouged are filled with rheum because they have no more power of resistance. Teeth repeatedly battered lose their hold in time and readily fall out. Joints that have often been wrenched become weak in the face of any force from outside and any kind of break or fracture is easily started. From the standpoint of bodily health then, it is evident that no other class is more miserable than the athletes. Some one might reasonably assert that athletes were so named very aptly,





the word athlete being derived from athlios (miserable), or else miserable persons (altholi) deriving their name from athletes, or else both in common, as it were, from one source are named from the word athliotes (misery).

But since we have now considered the greatest of physical blessings, namely health, let us pass to the rest. As for beauty, the facts of the case are that not only is natural beauty improved not a bit for athletes, but that, actually, many with well-proportioned limbs are totally changed by the coaches who take them in hand, overfatten them, and gorge them with flesh and blood. Even the faces of some the coaches render absolutely misshapen and ugly, especially those who have practised the pancratium or boxing. When they have finally broken or twisted some of their limbs, or gouged out their eyes, then, I suppose, and then especially, the beauty resulting from athletics is clearly evident! This is the good fortune their beauty meets with while they are well, but when they stop exercising their physical faculties go to ruin, and their limbs, all twisted as I said, are responsible for all kinds of deformity.

But perhaps they will make no claim to any of the benefits mentioned but will lay claim to strength. Yes, indeed, I am positive that they will assert that they are the strongest of men. But, by the gods, what sort of strength will be theirs, and useful for what? For agricultural labours? No doubt they can very successfully dig or harvest or plow or do some other kind of farm work! But perhaps they have strength for warfare. Summon again, I beg you, a Euripides who will hymn them thus: "Do men fight foes with discus held in hand?" Or is it rather in regard to cold and heat that they are strong, rivalling Hercules himself, so that they too, summer and winter alike, go clad in a single skin, always without shoes, and sleeping on the ground under the open sky? Why, in all these respects they are weaker than newborn babes.

In what else, then, will they exhibit strength? Or for what cause will they be arrogant? Surely not, I suppose, merely because they are able to throw down, in a palaestra or stadium, such men as cobblers, carpenters, or builders.

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That athletic training is useless in the real business of life, I am quite sure has become clear. Furthermore, that athletes are not worth much even in the exercises they practise, you would understand if I should tell you that well known fable that one of the not uninspired poets compiled and put into verse. It runs as follows: If Zeus willed that all living creatures should dwell in conditions of harmony and equality, so that the herald at Olympia would summon not only men to compete, but would allow all the animals as well to come into the stadium, not one man, I think, would receive the crown. "For in the distance race," to quote the poet, "the horse will be the best; in the stade race the hare will carry off the honours; in the diaulos the





deer will be champion. Of human beings not a one would count in the foot races. O nimble trained experts, O 'athlloi' (miserable) men!"

Nor would any of the descendants of Hercules appear stronger than an elephant or a lion. "I think," continues the poet, "the bull will be awarded the wreath in boxing, and the ass, if he wishes, will bear away the prize in the kicking match. And in the elaborate history it will be recorded that an ass won the pancratium against full grown men. 'Twas the twenty-first Olympiad, when victory came to Brayer!"

This fable very pleasantly shows that athletic strength does not result from training devised by man. And yet if athletes are not superior to animals even in strength, what one of the other blessings would they attain?

Then, too, if one should claim that physical pleasure is the benefit derived, I should reply that athletes have no share in this either while competing, or when retired, if, during the time of their training, they are involved in toil and troubles, and not only exercise but even eat under compulsion; and if, when they have arrived at the time to retire, they find themselves disabled in nearly every part of their bodies.

Perhaps, then, it is because of collecting larger sums of money than anyone else that athletes put on airs. And yet you can see for yourselves that all of them are in debt, not only during that period when they are competing, but also when they have quit training. You could never find one solitary athlete wealthier than any rich man's business agent picked at random. Nor is this getting rich out of one's business the main consideration either; the important thing is to master an art which will, as it were, swim out to safety with you if you get shipwrecked.

Therefore, if you are thinking, any of you, of preparing to make money safely and honestly, you must train yourselves in a profession which can continue throughout life.





## PLATE XII

Part of a mosaic floor from the Baths of Caracalla, showing various athletes whose features afford evidence of the rise of professionalism. Note also, the practice of tying up the hair.

Source: Johnston, op. cit., p. 243.











## PLATE XIII

Figure 1.

The caestus.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 117.

Figure 2.

Discus thrower, from the Caracalla mosaic.

Source: Deim, op. cit., p. 291.

Figure 3.

A boxer, from the Caracalla mosaic. Note the spikes extending from the caestus.

Source: Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, op. cit., Figure 74.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.

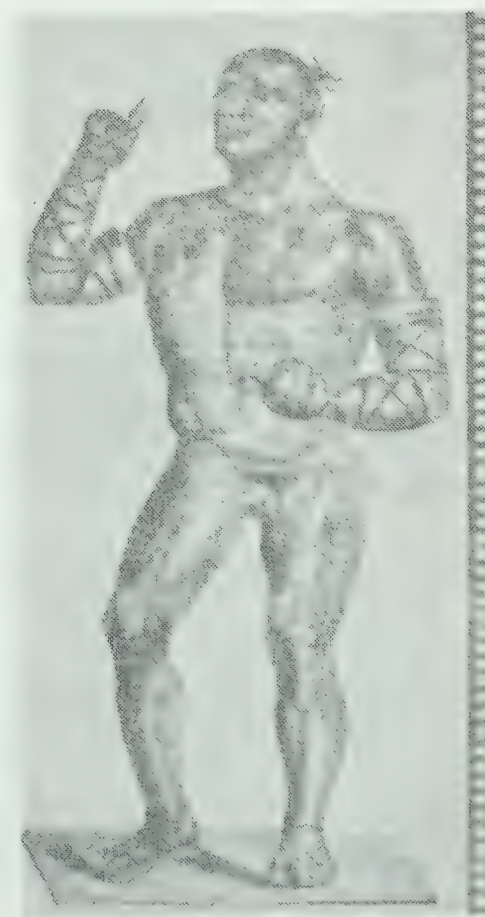


Figure 3.





## PLATE XIV

Figure 1.

A bronze statue of a boxer. His battered features suggest a long and distinguished career.

Source: G. M. Richter, Ancient Italy, (University of Michigan Press, 1955), Figure 211.

Figure 2.

A relief of boxers from the time of Trajan, believed to represent Dares and Entellus, from Virgil's Aeneid.

Source: Gardiner, op. cit., Figure 179.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## PLATE XV

Figure 1.

A second century Roman relief, showing pancratium contestants.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 104.

Figure 2.

Pancratium contestants and boxers.

Source: Gardiner, op. cit., Figure 177.





Figure 1.

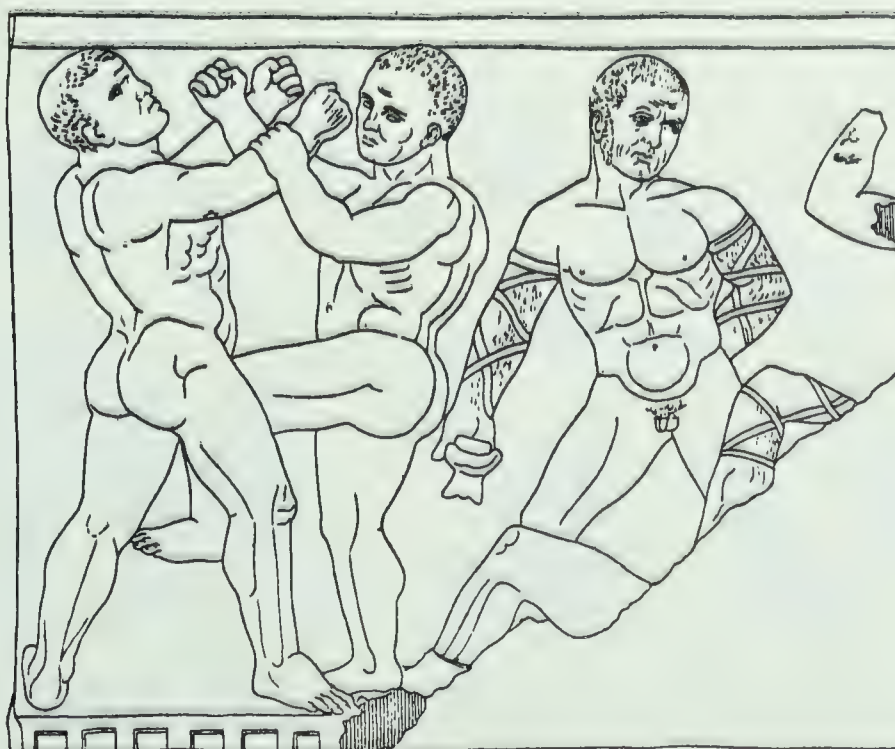


Figure 2.





## PLATE XVI

Figure 1.

A first century terra-cotta relief showing boxers and an athlete using a strigil, amongst the collonades of the palaestra.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 327.

Figure 2.

Various athletic contests on a mosaic from Tusculum.

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate XXIII, Figure 10.







## PLATE XVI

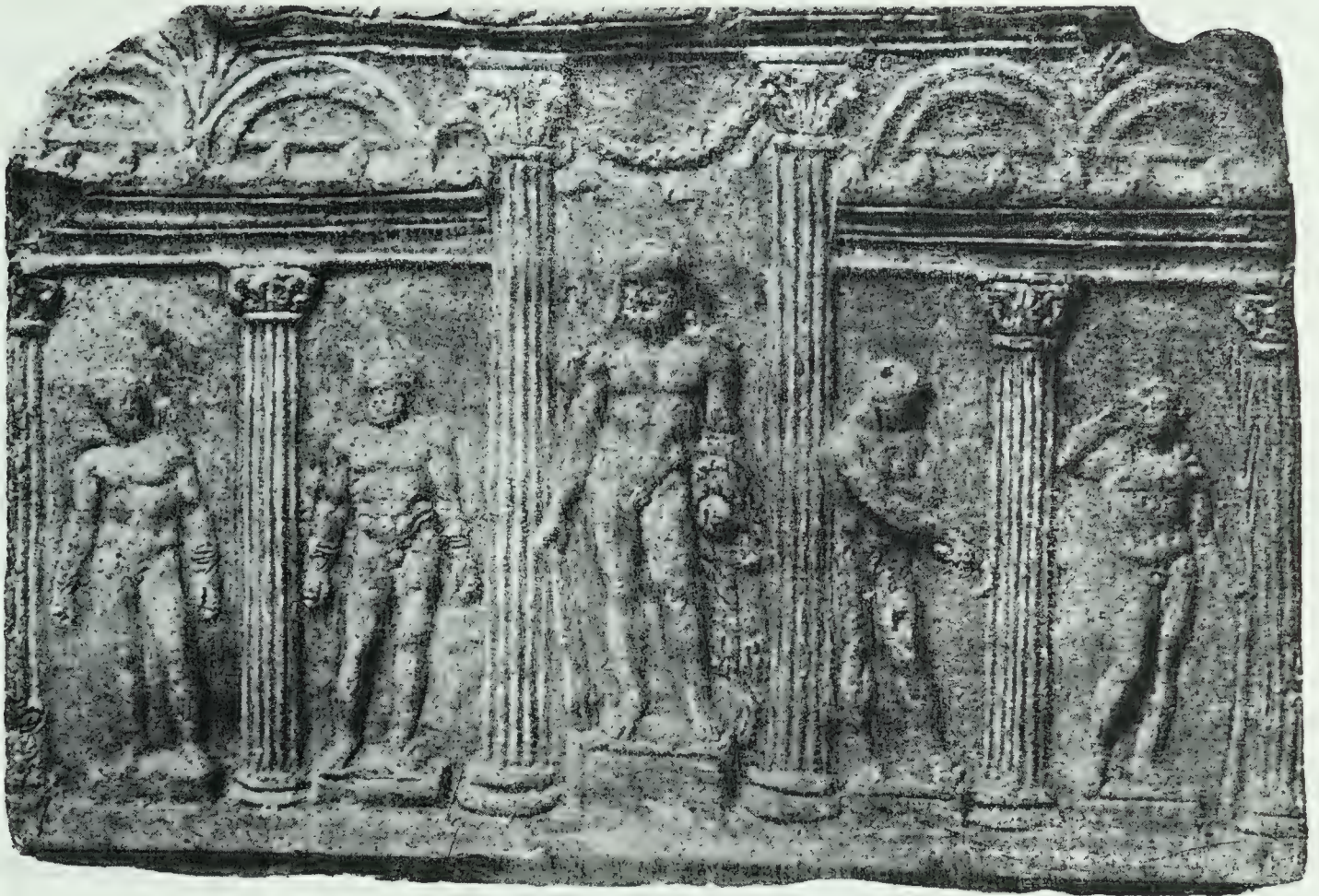


Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## CHAPTER VIII

### HUNTING AND FISHING

#### Hunting.

Hunting has long been a traditional sport of heroes and kings. The early Roman emphasis upon the serious practicalities of life, however, left little time for such extraneous activities. Under the Empire, with the increased wealth and leisure time of the citizens, field sports gained in popularity. An inscription of the period lists hunting amongst the greatest pleasures of life: "To hunt, to bathe, to gamble, to laugh, that is life."<sup>1</sup> Cicero<sup>2</sup> mentions hunting, along with the exercises of the Campus Martius, as a creditable form of amusement. Horace<sup>3</sup> claims that its joys will make one forget "the wretched cares that passion brings."

The Roman huntsman carried weapons of various types. Included among these were the sling, javelins for wounding from a distance, a small knife, and, for hunting boars and any other creature which might attack the hunter, the venabulum. This was used to keep the animal at a distance, and to finish it off; its long wooden handle had a broad iron point, with two smaller iron points at its base. In case an animal should break

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<sup>1</sup>CIL. VIII. 17938. "Venari, lavari, ludere, ridere, occest vivere."

<sup>2</sup>De Officiis op. cit. i. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Epodes op. cit. ii.



through this weaponry, the legs of the hunter were wrapped in leather bandages for further protection. Grattius,<sup>4</sup> in his informative poem, The Chase, further provides advice concerning the best and most suitable type of weapon, dog, horse, and trapping equipment for the sport. As for procedure, the dogs were used to follow the spoor and to run the game to earth, where it was attacked with javelin and hunting spear. Large nets were used to trap animals and were often used in conjunction with formides, long ropes to which were attached feathers of different colours, particularly red. The rustling of these brightly coloured feathers was used to frighten the fleeing animal, most often the deer, and to guide the quarry in the required direction to the waiting nets. Rabbits were a common form of game and presented the easiest prey. The net used for catching them was of a reasonably wide mesh so that young rabbits could escape, that is, the hunter "gave them to Artemis."<sup>5</sup> Horace<sup>6</sup> mentions the use of a noose also for catching the timid hare.

Sidonius,<sup>7</sup> in a rather cynical letter to Namatius, suggests the use of nets to him in his hunting, rather than Namatius' noisy dogs. "Indeed," he writes, "as they (the quarry) will rarely be caught when you are in pursuit, it is hardly worthwhile to disturb them by unleashing the packs in the open." He, like Pliny with his "beloved inactivity,"<sup>8</sup> perhaps

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<sup>4</sup>Grattius The Chase., from Minor Latin Poets, op. cit. See also Michael Ginsburg, "Hunting Scenes on Roman Glass in the Rhineland," University of Nebraska Studies, XVI, (August 1941), 9 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Ginsburg, ibid., p. 11.      <sup>6</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup>Letters op. cit. viii. 6. 11 f.

<sup>8</sup>Letters op. cit. i. 6.





prefers to wait beside the nets and so "enjoy the fruits of the hunt without stirring a foot."<sup>9</sup> In so doing, however, he forfeits the exhilaration which comes from galloping across the plains, exalting in skilful horsemanship as the hunter pits his abilities against those of the hunted. This is the facet that makes hunting a sport, rather than a mere search for meat. The taking of the game should be secondary to the enjoyments and frustrations felt in the matching of wits. Ovid<sup>10</sup> successfully portrays these trials and tribulations in his description of the Calydonian boar-hunt.

### Fishing.

Fishing, like hunting, would be work rather than sport if carried out purely for a livelihood, but there is, in the literature, sufficient mention of fishing for pleasure to warrant its inclusion as a sport. There were many ways of catching fish with nets and with baskets,<sup>11</sup> but as a sport, line-fishing only will be discussed here. However, Ausonius' amusing tale of an impatient boy who dives into the water in a futile attempt to recapture an escaping fish,<sup>12</sup> may be taken as an early representation of a popular "modern" fishing method.

The literature is generally vague as to descriptions of equipment

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<sup>9</sup>Sidonius loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup>Ovid Metamorphoses viii., trans. F. J. Miller (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1946).

<sup>11</sup>Oppian Fishing iii. 72 ff., trans. A. W. Mair (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928).

<sup>12</sup>Ausonius The Moselle op. cit. 240 ff.



used by line-fishermen. Rods were in use, and consisted of a length of cornel wood, or perhaps, "reeds of straight growth and unsoaked."<sup>13</sup> The lines were made of spun hemp and horse-hair dyed blue-grey and sea-purple.<sup>14</sup> An assortment of fish-hooks, disinterred at Pompeii, has provided detailed information on this item of equipment. Badham<sup>15</sup> describes these as varying extremely in form, size, and mode of adjustment, and manufactured of two different metals, iron and bronze:

Owing to the maritime site of Pompeii, these hooks, being exclusively adapted for sea-fishing, are generally of coarse fabrication, large in size, long in shank, and flattened at the top to facilitate attachment to the line. Some of them are two-barbed, others are fixed back to back like eel-hooks, and fastened to wire, as in the modern gorge-hook, to prevent the game snapping the hair. . . . Some of the larger of these hooks are leaded, the leads being formed into conico-cylindrical lumps shaped like dolphins, and named Delphini after a certain rude resemblance to that fish.

Of this dolphin-shaped lead, Oppian<sup>16</sup> speaks in the following lines which describe the Ancient Greeks' mode of sea-trolling:

The hook is fashioned of hard bronze or iron, and two separate barbs are attached to the great rope of twisted flax. On it they fix a live Basse—if a live one be at hand; but if it be a dead one, speedily one puts in its mouth a piece of lead, which they call a dolphin; and the fish, under the weight of the lead, moves its head to and fro, as if alive.

Fly-fishing is generally considered to be an invention of modern

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<sup>13</sup>Aelian On the Nature and Characteristics of Animals xii. 43., trans. A. F. Schofield (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1959).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Rev. C. D. Badham, Prose Halieutics, (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854).

<sup>16</sup>Op. cit. iii. 285 ff.





times, but the literature indicates that the artificial fly was known and used in Roman times. Martial<sup>17</sup> refers to the sea-bream which is deceived by the fly it has swallowed, though one cannot be sure that he speaks of an artificial fly. On the other hand, Aelian's mention<sup>18</sup> of wrapping the hook in scarlet wool, and attaching two wax-coloured feathers "that grew beneath a cock's wattles," leaves little doubt that the artificial fly was in use.

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<sup>17</sup>Epigrams op. cit. v. 18.

<sup>18</sup>Op. cit. xv. 1.



## LITERARY REFERENCES

### A. ATTITUDES TO HUNTING

Horace The Epodes ii.<sup>19</sup>

But when the wintry season of thundering Jove brings rains and snow, with his pack of hounds one either drives fierce boars from here and there into the waiting toils, or on polished pole stretches wide-meshed nets, a snare for greedy thrushes, and catches with the noose the timid hare and the crane that comes from far-sweet prizes! Amid such joys who does not forget the wretched cares that passion brings?

Plutarch Moralia, De Sollertia Animalium 7.<sup>20</sup>

For life does not presently forsake a man unless he may kill whole oxen or kids to supply his banquets, or unless--that he may disport himself in the theatre or take his pleasure in hunting--he may compel some beasts to be daring and to fight against their wills, and kill others whom Nature has not armed to defend themselves. For, in my opinion, he that is for sport and pleasure ought to seek out for such as will sport and be merry with him. And as it was the saying of Bion, that, though boys throw stones at frogs in sport, yet the frogs do not die in sport but in earnest; so in hunting and fishing, the fault is in the men delighting in the torments and cruel deaths of beasts and tearing them without compassion from their whelps and their young ones. For it is not in the making use of beasts that men do them wrong, but in the wastefully and cruelly destroying them.

Pliny Letters i. 6.<sup>21</sup>

To Cornelius Tacitus

Certainly you will laugh (and laugh you may) when I tell you that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has taken three noble boars. What! (methinks I hear you say with astonishment) Pliny! --Even he. However, I indulged at the same time my beloved inactivity, and whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with spear

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<sup>19</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 367.

<sup>20</sup>Essays and Miscellanies, op. cit., V, 170.

<sup>21</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 17.





and dart, but pen and tablets by my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come home with my pocket book full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised: you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. Besides the sylvan solitude with which one is surrounded, and the very silence which is observed on these occasions, strongly incline the mind to meditation. For the future therefore, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take along with you your tablets, as well as your basket and bottle: for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of roaming the hills as Diana. Farewell.

Sidonius Letters viii. 6. 11 ff.<sup>22</sup>

But as regards the hunter's business I do most earnestly urge you not to flatter yourself unduly. It is no good your inviting the boars to face your spear, when it's your business to hunt them with those most merciful hounds you possess in plenty (and indeed you do it all alone): you just set your quarry running, but never rouse him to a furious attack. Granted that it is forgiveable in your little hounds to shirk from approaching fearsome beasts like boars; but I do not know how you can excuse their behaviour in the case of goats, those poor snub-nosed creatures, or timid skittish deer, whom they hunt head high and spirits prone, and a maximum of barking to a minimum of speed.

So in future it will pay you better to surround with nets and toils the rugged crags and the woods so well suited to shroud the lairs of beasts, yourself applauding without stirring a foot; and if you have any sense of decency, you will give up shaking the plains with your free-ranging gallopings and lying in wait for the hares of Oleron; indeed, as they will rarely be caught when you are in pursuit, it is hardly worthwhile to disturb them by unleashing the packs in the open.

#### B. EQUIPMENT

##### (i) Dress.

Grattius The Chase 337 ff.<sup>23</sup>

So then be wakeful for your work and attend equipped with weapons fully. Weapons make the way of the chase more keen: let bandaging

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<sup>22</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 427.

<sup>23</sup>Minor Latin Poets op. cit. Loeb Ed. p. 185.



protect the lower parts of the leg: the leather should be calf's leather, and tawny pig-skin is fit for the march: the caps should gleam with the grey of the badger: close under the hunter's flanks should be girt a knife of Toledo steel: a missile weapon brandished in the right hand should give a terrifying sound, while curved reaping-hooks must break through thickets which block the way.

(ii) Nets.

Grattius The Chase 24 ff.<sup>24</sup>

The beginning in hunting equipment begins in nets and the ropes of the snares. First of all, experts prescribe that the rope along the edge of the net be twined, at the start, of thin thread and then four-fold strands be drawn tight to form the twist; that makes a length to stand its work; that will serve many a day. The snare itself, at the central mouth which it has when being made, you must entangle all round with six pouches so that in the whole cavity it may catch the savage quarry, however big he is. But I should have the whole net extend forty paces in length and rise ten full meshes in height from the ground. Nets likely to cost more outlay are unremunerative.

The Cinyphian marshes,<sup>25</sup> doubt it not, will yield excellent thread material; there is fine produce from the Aeolian valley<sup>26</sup> of the Sibyl, and there is the flax harvest on the sunny Tuscan meadow drinking in the neighbouring moisture from the river, where Tiber that fertilizes Latium glides through the shady silences and meets with mighty mouths the gulfs of the sea. But on the other hand our Falerians have flax-crops unfit for conflict, and those of the Spanish Saetabes are tested by a different use. The dancing crowds of sultry Canopus<sup>27</sup> are scarcely veiled by their transparent native linen when sacrificing in the ritual at Bubastis: its very whiteness, ruinous in a material useless for nets, reveals the deceit afar off and frightens away the beasts. Yet the poor guardian of a well-watered estate at Alabanda<sup>28</sup> can rear a growth of hemp, right fitting equipment for this task of ours. Burdensome is the care needed, but you may entrap within such toils, the bears of Thessaly. Only, first take pains that no moist-

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 153 ff.

<sup>25</sup>In North Africa between the two Syrtes.

<sup>26</sup>At Cumae on the Bay of Naples.

<sup>27</sup>In Egypt.

<sup>28</sup>In Caria, Asia Minor.





ure, worst of plagues, steal thereon: in damp equipment there is no use, no dependence. Therefore, whether streams in a narrow valley and sluggish swamps have wrought harm amid the hunter's task, or unforeseen rain from heaven shall have drenched the nets, either unfold them to face the northern breezes of serene Helice or set them in murky smoke to slacken. For such reasons too it is forbidden to touch the first crops of flax before the Pleiad<sup>29</sup> has kindled the year with ripening fires and appeared in its brilliant rising. If nets drink in breeze or smoke their longer service answers accordingly.

(iii) Scares and Spears.

Grattius The Chase 75 ff.<sup>30</sup>

Some hunters have found in the plumes plucked from the filthy vulture a handy means of working and no slight help. Only, at intervals along the line there must be added the down of the snow-white swan, and that is implement enough: the white feathers glisten in white sunlight, formidable appearance for game, whereas the dread stench from the black vulture, disturbs the forest creatures; and the contrast of colour works the better effect. But, while the plumage hanging from your device has its bright gleam or heavy scent, let it be at the same time soft to handle, and not very closely entwined, so that the cord when pulled in will not entangle you with its feathers in your hurry and by its faultiness convict you in its very using. This device of terror has more use against stags; but when the pliant feathers are sometimes dyed with African vermilion and the flaxen cord gleams from its projecting forks,<sup>31</sup> it is rare for any beast to escape the counterfeit terrors. Yes, and there is also some use in "running" nooses: it is recommended to compose these of deer's leather preferably: the deceit will cloak the snare through falsely suggesting a creature of the wild. What of the hunter who to his toothed springe<sup>32</sup> adds an oaken stake? How often, thanks to these tricksome devices, does one unexpectedly reap the fruit of another's toil?

Fortunate the man whose industry made him the first inventor of arts so great! . . . Dercylos his name. . . He was the first also to dress hunting-spears with a strong tooth, and, controlling the angry onslaught of a forward thrust, to receive all the (boar's) weight on pro-

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<sup>29</sup>Summer began with the rising of the constellation of the Seven Pleiads and winter with their setting.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 159 ff.

<sup>31</sup>The ancon was a forked pole on which was spread nets.

<sup>32</sup>Springe--a noose or snare for small game.





jecting spear-guards. Later, there succeeded to them weapons furnished with spit-like teeth and two-fold fork, and some gave their spear-ends a ring of sharp points to prevent the thick steel's inactivity in the wounded quarry. You are to shun the allurements of fleeting novelty: in this same field of hunting they do harm by a small or excessive size of spear. . . . All weapons have been the better fashioned by healthy moderation. Wherefore for javelins too we weigh thoroughly their manageable handling, lest their wounding power speed lightly or the weapon's force fall short. . . .

Now, moreover, learn the whole range of choice for strong spears. The cornel tree grows abundantly in the Thracian valleys of the Hebrus; there are shady myrtles along the shores of Venus; there are yew trees and pines and the broom-plants of Altinum, and the lopped bough more likely to help with its service the uncouth country folk. . . . But it is only with much toil that the other stems widely grown in our western woods are fashioned into spear-shafts. Never did bough of its own accord rise tall into the air; and the broom curves even in its lower stem. Come, then, strip off at once the excessive growth and harmful branches; indulgence overloads trees with leaves. Later, when the tree proves its goodliness in its tall stem and its stately branches tend starwards, cut round the places where suckers start and remove the rows of sprouting branches. If any sap of an injurious sort causes harm, it will flow out of these wounds and so harden the weak veins. When the shafts have risen to a height of five feet, cut them with full grasp, while the year approaches the season of fruit-laden leafage and autumn holds back the warm showers.

(iv) Dogs.

Grattius The Chase 151 ff.<sup>33</sup>

The foremost care is that of dogs; no other care comes before that throughout the whole system of hunting, whether you energetically pursue the untamed quarry with bare feet or use skill to manage the conflict.

. . . . .

But lest loss be the outcome of excessive zeal, the dog's duties are regulated: he must not assail his foe with barking; he must not seize on some trivial prey or on signs of a nearer catch and so blindly lose the fruit of his first activities. When, however, better fortune already attends the outlay of toil, and the sought for lair of the wild beasts is near he must both know his enemies are hidden and prove this by signs: either he shows his new won pleasure by lightly wagging the tail, or, digging in his own foot-prints with the nails of his paws, he gnaws the soil and sniffs the air with nostrils raised

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 165 ff.





high. And yet to prevent the first signs from misleading the dog in his keenness, the hunter bids him run all about the inner space encircling by rough ground and nose the paths by which the beasts come and go; then, if it happens that the first expectation has failed him in the place, he turns again to his task in wide coursings; but, if the scent was right, he will make for the first trail again as the quarry has not crossed the circle. Therefore, when full success has arrived with its proper issue, the dog must come as comrade to share the prey and must recognize his own reward: thus let it be a delight to have given ungrudging service to the work. . . .

(v) Archery.

Suetonius Domitian 19.<sup>34</sup>

He took no interest in arms, but was particularly devoted to archery. There are many who have more than once seen him slay a hundred wild beasts of different kinds on his Alban estate, and purposely kill some of them with two successive shots in such a way that the arrows gave the effect of horns. Sometimes he would have a slave stand at a distance and hold out the palm of his right hand for a mark, with the fingers spread; then he directed his arrows with such accuracy that they passed harmlessly between the fingers.

Sidonius Letters i. 2. 5.<sup>35</sup>

(To Agricola on habits of Theodoric in the hunt) When a hunt has been proclaimed and he sallies forth, he considers it beneath his royal dignity to have his bow slung at his side; but if in the chase or on the road chance presents bird or beast within his range, he puts his hand behind his back, and an attendant places the bow in it, with the string or thong hanging loose; for he thinks it childish to carry the bow in a case and womanish to take it over ready strung. When he takes it he either holds it straight in front of him and bends the two ends and so strings it, or he rests upon his raised foot the end which has the knot, and runs his finger along the loose string until he comes to the dangling loop; then he takes up the arrows, sets them in place, and lets them fly.

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<sup>34</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 381.

<sup>35</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 339.





## C. A BOAR HUNT

Ovid Metamorphoses viii.<sup>36</sup>

From this covert the boar was roused and launched himself with a mad rush against his foes, like lightning struck out from the clashing clouds. The glade is laid low by his onrush, and the trees crash as he knocks against them. The heroes raise a halloo and with unflinching hands hold their spears poised with the broad iron heads well forward. The boar comes rushing on, scatters the dogs one after another as they strive to stop his mad rush, and thrust off the baying pack with his deadly sidelong stroke. The first spear, thrown by Echion's arm, missed its aim and struck glancing on the trunk of a maple-tree. The next, if it had not been thrown with too much force, seemed sure of transfixing the back where it was aimed. It went too far. . . so with irresistible and death-dealing force the beast rushed on the youths, and overbore Eupalamus and Pelagon, who were stationed on the extreme right. Their comrades caught them as they lay. But Enaesus, the son of Hippocoon, did not escape the boar's fatal stroke. As he in fear was just turning to run, he was hamstrung and his muscles gave way beneath him. Pyliaean Nestor came near perishing before he ever went to the Trojan War; but, putting forth all his strength, he leaped by his spear-pole into the branches of a tree which stood near by, and from this place of safety he looked down upon the foe he had escaped. The raging beast whetted his tusks on the oak-tree's trunk; and, threatening destruction and emboldened by his freshly sharpened tusks, ripped up the thigh of the mighty Hippasus with one sweeping blow. . . . Atlanta notched a swift arrow on the cord and sent it speeding from her bent bow. The arrow just grazed the top of the boar's back and remained stuck beneath his ear, staining the bristles with a trickle of blood. Nor did she show more joy over the success of her own stroke than Melaeus. He was the first to see the blood, the first to point it out to his companions, and to say: "Due honour shall your brave deed receive." The men, flushed with shame, spurred each other on, gaining courage as they cried out, hurling their spears in disorder. The mass of missiles made them of no effect, and kept them from striking as they were meant to do. Then Ancaeus, the Arcadian, armed with a two-headed axe raging to meet his fate, cried out: "Learn now, O youths, how far a man's weapons surpass a girl's; and leave this task to me. Though Latona's daughter herself shield this boar with her own arrows, in spite of Diana shall my good right arm destroy him." So, swollen with pride and with boastful lips, he spoke: and, heaving up in two hands his two-edged axe, he stood on tiptoe, poised to strike. The boar made in upon his bold enemy, and, as the nearest point of death, he fiercely struck at the upper part of the groin with his two tusks. Ancaeus fell: his entrails poured out amid streams of blood and the ground was soaked with gore. Then Ixion's son, Pirithoüs, advanced against the

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<sup>36</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 431 ff.





foe, brandishing a hunting-spear in his strong right hand. To him Theseus cried out in alarm: "Keep away, O dearer to me than my own self, my soul's other half; it is no shame for brave men to fight at long range. Ancaeus' rash valour has proved his bane." He spoke and hurled his own heavy shaft with its strong bronze point. Though this was well aimed and seemed sure to reach the mark, a leafy branch of an oak-tree turned it aside. Then the son of Aeson hurled his javelin which chance caused to swerve from its aim and fatally wound an innocent dog, passing clear through his flanks and pinning him to the ground. But the hand of Meleanger had a different fortune: he threw two spears, the first of which stood in the earth, but the second struck squarely in the middle of the creature's back. Straightway, while the boar rages and whirls round and round, spouting forth foam and fresh blood in a hissing stream, the giver of the wound presses his advantage, pricks his enemy on to madness, and at last plunges his gleaming hunting-spear right through the shoulder. The others vent their joy by wild shouts of applause and crowd around to press the victor's hand. They gaze in wonder at the huge beast lying stretched out over so much ground, and still think it hardly safe to touch him. But each dips his spear in the blood.

## FISHING

### A. EQUIPMENT

Martial Epigrams v. 18.<sup>37</sup>

I abhor the crafty and cursed trickery of presents; gifts are like hooks; for who does not know that the greedy sea-bream is deceived by the fly he has gorged?

Aelian On Animals xii. 43.<sup>38</sup>

Fishing with a hook is the most accomplished form and the most suitable for free men. One needs horse-hair,<sup>39</sup> white, black, red, and grey in colour. If the hairs are dyed, men select only those coloured blue-grey and sea-purple; for all the rest, they say, are bad. Men also use the straight bristles of wild boars and flax also, and a quantity of bronze and lead, cords of esparto, feathers,<sup>40</sup> especially white, black, and particoloured. And anglers also use crimson and sea-

<sup>37</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 309.

<sup>39</sup>For the fishing line.

<sup>38</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 67.

<sup>40</sup>For artificial flies.





purple wool, corks, and pieces of wood. Iron and other materials are needed; among them reeds of straight growth and unsoaked, club-rushes that have been soaked, stalks of fennel that have been rubbed smooth, a fishing-rod of cornel-wood, the horns and hide of a goat.

Aelian On Animals xv. 1.<sup>41</sup>

I have heard and can tell of a way of catching fish in Macedonia, and it is this. Between Beroea and Thessalonica there flows a river called Astraeus. Now there are in it fishes of a speckled hue, but what the natives call them, it is better to enquire of the Macedonians. Now these fish feed upon the flies of the country which flit about the river and which are quite unlike flies elsewhere; they do not look like wasps, nor could one fairly describe this creature as comparable in shape with what are called Anthedones (bumble-bees), nor even with actual honey-bees, although they possess a distinct feature of each of the aforesaid insects. Thus, they have the audacity of a fly; you might say they are the size of a bumble-bee, but their colour imitates that of a wasp, and they buzz like a honey-bee. All the natives call them Hippurus. These flies settle on the stream and seek the food that they like; they cannot however escape the observation of the fishes that swim below. So when a fish observes a Hippurus on the surface it swims up noiselessly under water for fear of disturbing the surface and to avoid scaring its prey. Then, when close at hand in the fly's shadow it opens its jaws and swallows the fly, just as a wolf snatches a sheep from the farm-yard. Having done this it plunges beneath the ripple. Now although fishermen know of these happenings, they do not in fact make any use of these flies as bait for fish, because if the human hand touched them it destroys the natural bloom. Their wings wither and the fish refuse to eat them, and for that reason will not go near them, because by some mysterious instinct they detest flies that have been caught. And so with the skill of anglers, the men circumvent the fish by the following artful contrivance. They wrap the hook in scarlet wool, and to the wool they attach two feathers that grow beneath a cock's wattles and are the colour of wax. The fishing rod is six feet long, and so is the line. So they let down this lure, and the fish, attracted and excited by the colour comes to meet it, and fancying from the beauty of the sight that he is going to have a wonderful banquet, opens wide his mouth, is entangled with the hook, and gains a bitter feast, for he is caught.

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<sup>41</sup> Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 203. W. Radcliffe claims this is the first clear historical reference to fishing with the artificial fly. (Fishing from the Earliest Times, (London: John Murray, 1926), p. 187).





## B. METHODS

Ausonius The Moselle 240 ff.<sup>42</sup>

Now, where the bank supplies easy approaches, a devastating throng ransacks all the depths for fish ill-sheltered--alack!--by the river's sanctuary. This man far out in mid-stream trails dripping nets, and sweeps up shoals of fish, snared in the knotty folds; but this, where the river glides with peaceful flood draws his seines, buoyed up with floats of cork; while yonder on the rocks one leans over the waters which flow beneath, and lets droop the pliant tip of his rod, casting hooks baited with deadly food. All unsuspecting the finny tribe rush upon them agape; and when--too late!--their opened gullets feel the concealed barbs pierce deep within, they struggle, and their struggles are betrayed above, when the wand bends in response to the tremulous vibrations of the quivering line. Straightway the boy skilfully whisks his prey from the water, swinging it sidelong with a whistling stroke: a hissing follows on the blow, even as the breeze whines and whistles when sometimes a scourge is whirled through empty space and disturbs the air. The dripping catch flounders on the parched rocks and quakes at the deadly shafts of light-bringing day. . . . I myself have seen fish, already quivering in the throes of death, summon up their last gasp and, leaping high in the air, cast themselves with a somersault into the river beneath, gaining once more the waters which they never looked to find again. Thereat, impatient at his loss, the lad impetuously plunges in from on high, seeking--poor fool--to catch them as he swims.

Aelian On Animals xiv. 8.<sup>43</sup>

Now in the Eretænus<sup>44</sup> there are Eels of very great size and far fatter than those from any other place, and this is how they are caught. The fisherman sits upon a rock jutting out in some bay-like spot on the river where the stream widens out, or else upon a tree which a fierce wind has uprooted and thrown down close to the bank--the tree is beginning to rot and is no use for cutting up and burning. So the eel-fisher sits himself and takes the intestine of a freshly slaughtered lamb which measures some three or four cubits and has been thoroughly fattened, he lowers one end into the water, and keeps it turning in the eddies; the other end he holds in his hands, and a piece of reed, the length of a sword-handle, has been inserted into it. The food does not escape the

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<sup>42</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 243.

<sup>43</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 147.

<sup>44</sup>Near Venice.



notice of the Eels, for they delight in this intestine. And the first Eel approaches, stimulated by hunger and with open jaws and fastening its curved, hook-like teeth, which are hard to disentangle, in the bait, continues to leap up in its efforts to drag it down. But when the fisherman realizes from the agitation of the intestine that the Eel is held fast, he puts the reed to which the intestine has been attached to his mouth and blows down it with all his might, inflating the intestine very considerably. And the downflow of breath distends and swells it. And so the air descends into the Eel, fills its head, fills its windpipe, and stops the creature's breathing. And as the Eel can neither breathe nor detach its teeth which are fixed in the intestine, it is suffocated, and is drawn up, a victim of the intestine, the blown air, and thirdly of the reed. Now this is a daily occurrence, and many are the Eels caught by many a fisherman.





## PLATE XVII

Figures 1 and 2.

Details from a large third century mosaic showing both rod and hand-line fishing.

Source: Grimal, op. cit., Figures 62 and 63.

Figure 3.

A Pompeian wall painting showing two fishermen, one using a rod and line, the other a net.

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate LXIV, Figure 4.

Figure 4.

Red-figured painting on a wine-jar, showing fishermen.

Source: Ibid., Plate LXIV, Figure 1.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.





## PLATE XVIII

This is another section of the mosaic, part of which appears in Plate XVII, showing boating and rod-fishing. The manner in which the line is attached to the rod suggests the use of "runners" as on later rods with reels.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 177.



## PLATE XVIII







## PLATE XIX

Figure 1.

A second century relief of a boar-hunt.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 180.

Figure 2.

A third century sarcophagus relief of a boar-hunt.

Source: Ibid., Plate 175.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## PLATE XX

Figure 1.

A hunting scene on an engraved glass bowl found in a fourth century Roman building at Chapel Leazes.

Source: Journal of Roman Studies, XLVII, (1957), Plate XIV.

Figure 2.

A third century Roman mosaic showing the use of dogs for directing the game towards the nets.

Source: Sport ed Arte, op. cit., Plate 176.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.





## CHAPTER IX

### AQUATICS

#### Swimming.

The fact that swimming was a common activity is confirmed by the many references to it in the writings of the time. Unfortunately, the reader is again frustrated should he seek detailed information concerning the style of swimming and strokes used by those engaging in the sport. The writings merely allude to some type of alternate stroking with the arms, and no mention of the leg action occurs in the translations.

Horace<sup>1</sup> gives some insight into the manner by which non-swimmers were taught to swim through his mention of a cork float, which was evidently a learning-aid for beginners. A second mention of a swimming-aid concerns the Roman soldier who found that his broad curved shield could be utilized to help support him while swimming.<sup>2</sup> Vegetius<sup>3</sup> recommends that every Roman recruit should be able to swim, "for it is not always possible to cross rivers on bridges," and it also serves as "relaxation from their weariness in marching."

In the tales of war, which are recurrent throughout Roman history, references may be found to heroes who had need of their talent for

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<sup>1</sup>Satires op. cit. i. 4. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Ammianus Marcellinus xvi. 11. 9.; xxiv. 6. 9., trans. John C. Rolfe (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935).

<sup>3</sup>Military Science loc. cit.



swimming. One of the oldest and most famous stories is that of Horatius Cocles, who fought the Etruscans at the Tiber bridge in 508 B.C., and then swam the Tiber fully armed after the bridge was demolished.<sup>4</sup> Publius Scaevius, one of Caesar's men, was another who owed his life to his swimming ability.<sup>5</sup> Julius Caesar himself was noted for his prowess as a swimmer, which he demonstrated at Alexandria in making his escape by swimming.<sup>6</sup> When a pact was signed by Caesar, Anthony, and Sextus, their men were so overjoyed that they jumped over-board or ran into the water and embraced one another while swimming and diving.<sup>7</sup> Of Hadrian's soldiers, one reads that they were so well trained that they were able to swim the Ister<sup>8</sup> with their weapons.<sup>9</sup>

When the public baths were constructed, they were often provided with pools large enough for swimming, as were some of the private pools of the wealthier citizens. Seneca<sup>10</sup> complains of the uproar emanating from the bathing establishment over which he has his residence, including that noise caused by the bathers plunging into the swimming pool. Pliny's villa at Laurens had a warm bath wherein he could swim, and at the same time, obtain a view of the sea.<sup>11</sup> His Tuscan villa, at the foot of the Apennines, contained a warm pool in the court for swimming "more at

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<sup>4</sup>Livy op. cit. ii. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Dio op. cit. xxxvii. 53.

<sup>6</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Julius 64.

<sup>7</sup>Dio op. cit. xlviii. 37.

<sup>8</sup>The lower part of the Danube.

<sup>9</sup>Dio op. cit. lxix. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Epistulae Morales op. cit. lvi. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Letters op. cit. ii. 17.





large."<sup>12</sup> Baiae was a popular seaside resort on the Bay of Naples, famous for its baths, and where, it may be assumed, sea-swimming also was undertaken for pleasure.

Some members of the Roman aristocracy deemed swimming to be so important that they undertook the instruction of their off-spring personally; Cato taught his son to swim,<sup>13</sup> and Augustus included swimming in the education which he gave his grandsons.<sup>14</sup> Little is known of swimming contests amongst the Romans except for a fleeting allusion to them by Cicero,<sup>15</sup> where he suggests old age can be happy without such vigorous athletic activities.

### Boating.

Boating was a matter of practical importance to those Romans who ventured upon the sea for fishing, travel, or trade. Thiel, however, stresses the fact that they did not have a real fondness for the sea, although they used it through necessity for trade and warfare.<sup>16</sup> Even then, the fleets of the Empire were founded largely upon non-Roman elements such as squadrons from Rhodes, Pergamum, and Sicily, and other maritime powers.<sup>17</sup> General Latin literature indicates that the Roman's attachment

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid. v. 6.

<sup>13</sup>Plutarch The Parallel Lives op. cit. Cato 20.

<sup>14</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Augustus 64.

<sup>15</sup>Cicero De Senectute xvi. 57., trans. W. A. Falconer (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1930).

<sup>16</sup>J. H. Thiel, Studies on the History of Roman Sea Power in Republican Times, (Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1946), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 13.



to the sea was that of a bather, rather than a sailor.<sup>18</sup> This enjoyment of the sea from the beach is expressed in a poem ascribed to Petronius in which he proclaims the wonders of the sea-shore, and this to him is the sea.<sup>19</sup>

Literary references to boating, though few in number, give indications of its use for recreation also. Virgil<sup>20</sup> replaces the more usual chariot-race with a boat-race in the funeral games of the Aeneid. Ausonius,<sup>21</sup> writing in the fourth century, tells of boys at play imitating the naumachia and sea-battles of bygone days, as they "ply their nimble strokes with the right hand and the left." Sidonius<sup>22</sup> in writing to Domitius, mentions a turning post worn by oars having been dashed against it while their ancestors were re-enacting Virgil's boat-race. Pliny<sup>23</sup> refers to sailing as one of the diversions of the people at Hippo in Africa. He makes this reference so casually that the reader suspects that Pliny was familiar with such a means of recreation amongst his fellow Romans. As sailing vessels were certainly a common means of travel, it seems probable that small sailing boats were used for purposes of recreation.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>Fragment LII., from the Latin text, cited in ibid., p. 7.

Haec quisquis calcare potest, in litore tuto,  
ludat et hoc solum iudicet esse mare.

<sup>20</sup>Op. cit. v. 114 ff. For discussion of evidence relating to boat-races at Actium, see Percy Gardiner, "Boat-races among the Greeks," Journal of Hellenic Studies, II, (1881), 90 ff.

<sup>21</sup>The Moselle op. cit. 200 ff.

<sup>22</sup>Letters op. cit. ii. 2. 19.

<sup>23</sup>Letters op. cit. ix. 33.





## LITERARY REFERENCES

### SWIMMING

#### A. MISCELLANEOUS REFERENCES

Cicero De Senectute xvi. 57.<sup>23</sup>

Let others, then, have their weapons, their horses and their spears, their fencing foils, and games of ball, their swimming contests and foot-races, and out of many sports leave us old fellows our dice and knuckle-bones. Or take away the dice box too, if you will, since old age can be happy without it.

Horace Satires ii. 1. 8.<sup>25</sup>

(Tre.) Let those who need sound sleep oil themselves and swim across the Tiber thrice; then, as night comes on, let them steep themselves in wine.

Plutarch Marcus Catc 20.<sup>26</sup>

He was therefore himself not only the boy's reading-teacher, but his tutor in law, and his athletic trainer, and he taught his son not merely to hurl the javelin and fight in armour and ride a horse, but also to box, and to endure heat and cold, and to swim lustily through the eddies and billows of the Tiber.

Suetonius Augustus 64.<sup>27</sup>

He taught his grandsons reading, swimming, and the other elements of education, for the most part himself, taking special pains to train them to imitate his own handwriting.

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<sup>24</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 71.

<sup>25</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 127.

<sup>26</sup>The Parallel Lives op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 363.

<sup>27</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 221.



Fronto Correspondence, To Marcus Antonius.<sup>28</sup>

. . . though it is out of keeping with my genius, would you advise me to strive against nature and swim, as they say, against the stream.

Sidonius Letters iv. 4. 1.<sup>29</sup>

. . . in bygone days of our youth we contended in ball games and dicing, jumping and running, hunting and swimming.

## B. METHODS

Horace Satires i. 4. 120.<sup>30</sup>

When years have brought strength of body and mind, you will swim without the cork.

Statius Thebaid vi. 545 ff.<sup>31</sup>

. . . here swims the youth contemptuous of Phrixean waters, and gleams with sea-blue body through the pictured wave; one sees the side-ward sweep of his arm, and he seems about to make the alternate stroke, nor would one think to find his hair dry in the woven fabric.

Ovid Metamorphoses iv. 3.<sup>32</sup>

He, clapping his body with hollow palms, dives into the pool, and swimming with alternate strokes flashes with gleaming body through the transparent flood.

<sup>28</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 47      <sup>29</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 81.

<sup>30</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 59. A ratis was a raft formed by joining together a number of planks or strips, hence scripea ratis, a float made of rushes to support beginners when learning to swim, in the same manner as tablets of cork which are mentioned here. (See A. Rich, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities).

<sup>31</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 101. A description of a figure on a cloak.

<sup>32</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 203.





Propertius The Elegies i. 11. 12.<sup>33</sup>

. . . the waters yielding with ease to the swimmer's either hand.

Rutilius A Voyage Home to Gaul i. 245.<sup>34</sup>

. . . and so, with its surface at rest, it knows nought of the wayward wind, like the water imprisoned in Cumae's baths which buoys up the unhurried arms plied by the swimmer in alternate sweep.

### C. SWIMMING FOR MILITARY PURPOSES

Vegetius Military Science i.<sup>35</sup>

Every recruit, without exception, should in the summer months learn to swim; for it is not always possible to cross rivers on bridges but a retreating and pursuing army is frequently compelled to swim. Sudden rains or snow-falls often cause torrents to overflow their banks and risk is increased by ignorance not only of the enemy but of water. The ancient Romans, therefore, perfected in every branch of military science by so many wars and perpetual dangers, chose the Field of Mars next to the Tiber in which the youth might wash off the sweat and dust after military exercise, and by swimming gain relaxation from their weariness in marching. It is opportune for not only the infantry but also the cavalry, the horses, and the sutlers, whom they call "helmet-ers" to be trained to swim, lest they be inexperienced when necessity arises and faces them. . . .

Ammianus Marcellinus xvi. 11. 9.<sup>36</sup>

. . . they, now wading through the shallows, now swimming on their shields, which they put under them like canoes, came to a neighbouring island. . .

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<sup>33</sup>Trans. H. E. Butler (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1912), p. 31.

<sup>34</sup>Minor Latin Poets op. cit. Loeb Ed. p. 785. A reference to the port at Centumcellae, now Civita Vecchia, constructed under Trajan.

<sup>35</sup>Cited in Lewis and Reinhold, op. cit., II, 498.

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 261. Julian's attack on one of the islands in the Rhine against the Germans, A.D. 357.



Ammianus Marcellinus xxiv. 6. 9.<sup>37</sup>

. . . some panic stricken soldiers, fearing to remain behind after the signal had been given, lying on their shields, which are broad and curved, and clinging fast to them, though they showed little skill in guiding them, kept up with the swift ships across the eddying stream.

Suetonius Julius 64.<sup>38</sup>

At Alexandria, while assaulting a bridge he was forced by a sudden sally of the enemy to take to a small skiff; when many others threw themselves into the same boat, he plunged into the sea, and after swimming for two hundred paces, got away to the nearest ship, holding up his left hand all the way, so as not to wet some papers which he was carrying, and dragging his cloak after him with his teeth, to keep the enemy from getting it as a trophy.

Dio Roman History xlviii. 37.<sup>39</sup>

(39 B.C.) Those who were in the small boats did not wait to reach the land itself, but jumped out into the sea, and those on land rushed out into the water. Meanwhile they embraced one another while swimming, and threw their arms around one another's necks as they dived, making a spectacle of varied sights and sounds.

Dio Roman History lxix. 9.<sup>40</sup>

(A.D. 121) So excellently, indeed, had his soldiery been trained, that the cavalry of the Batavians, as they were called, swam the Ister with their arms.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 461. Julian, crossing the Tigris river with his fleet while fighting the Persians, leaves the shore hurriedly.

<sup>38</sup>The Lives of the Caesars op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 85.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. V. 297. Caesar and Anthony make a pact with Sextus.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. VIII, 443. This is a reference to the soldiers of Hadrian.





## BOATING

Ausonius The Moselle 200 ff.<sup>41</sup>

And when oared skiffs join in mimic battle in mid-stream, how pleasing is the pageant which this sight affords! They circle in and out, and graze the sprouting blades of the cropped turf along the green banks. The husbandman, standing along the rise of the green bank, watches the light-hearted owners as they leap about on stern or prow, the boyish crew straggling over the river's wide expanse, and never feels the day is slipping by, puts their play before his business while present pleasure shuts out whilom cares. As those games which Liber beholds on the Cumaeen tide whenas he walks abroad over the planted hills of reeking Gaurus, or passes through the vineyards of smoke-plumed Vesuvius, when Venus, glad of Augustus' victory of Actium, bade the pert Loves enact in mimicry such fierce combats as the navies of the Nile and Roman triremes waged below Leucas and Apollo's hold; . . . or as the harmless onsets of boats and playful battles of the naumachia which the dark sea repeats in his green imagery while Sicilian Pelorus<sup>42</sup> looks down;--such the appearance which youth, river, skiffs with painted prows, lend to these merry lads. And as they ply their nimble strokes with the right hand and the left, and throwing their weight now in turn upon this oar, now upon that, the wave reflects a watery semblance of sailors to match them.

Sidonius Letters ii. 2. 19.<sup>43</sup>

In the middle of the deep part is a small island. Here a turning post sticks up on the top of a natural accumulation of boulders; it is worn by the dents of oars dashed against it in the course of the circling evolutions of the ships, and it is the scene of the jolly wrecks of vessels which collide at the sports. For here it was the traditional custom of our elders to imitate the contest of Drepanum in the mythical tale of Troy.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 241.

<sup>42</sup>Now Capo di Faro, at the north-east extremity of Sicily.

<sup>43</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 435.

<sup>44</sup>The boat-race described by Virgil in the Aeneid v. 124., infra.





## A BOAT-RACE

Virgil Aeneid v. 124 ff.<sup>45</sup>

Far out to sea, over against the foaming shores lies a rock which at times the swollen waves beat and o'erwhelm, when stormy North-westerners hide the stars; in time of calm it is voiceless, and rises from the placid wave a level surface, and a welcome haunt for sun-loving gulls. Here as a mark father Aeneas set up a green goal of leafy ilex, for the sailors to know whence to return and where to double round the long course. Then they chose places by lot, and from the sterns the captains themselves shine forth afar in glory of gold and purple; the rest of the crews are crowned with poplar wreaths, and their naked shoulders glisten, moist with oil. They man the thwarts, their arms straining to the oars; so straining they await the signal, while throbbing fear and eager passion for glory drain each bounding heart. Then, when the clear trumpet sounded, all at once shot forth from their starting-places; the mariners' shouts strike the heavens; as arms are drawn back the waters are turned into foam. They cleave the furrows abreast, and all the sea gapes open, upturned by the oars and triple-pointed beaks. Not such the headlong speed when in the two-horse chariot race the cars seize the plain and dart forth from their stalls! Not so wildly over their dashing steeds do the chariotteers shake their waving reins, bending forward to the lash! Then with applause and shouts of men, and zealous cries of partisans, the whole woodland rings; the sheltered beach rolls up the sound, and the hills, smitten, echo back the din.

Gyas flies in front of the rest and glides foremost on the waves amid confusion and uproar; next Cloanthus follows close, better manned but held back by his pine's slow bulk. After them, at equal distance, the Dragon and Centaur strive to win the lead; and now the Dragon has it, now the huge Centaur wins past her, now both move together with even prows, and plow the salt waters with long keel. And now they neared the rock and were close to the turn, when Gyas, still first, and leader in the half-course, loudly hails his ship's pilot, Meneotes: "Whither man, so far off to the right? This way steer her course; hug the shore and let the oar-blades graze the rocks on the left; let others keep to the deep!" He spoke; but Meneotes, fearing blind rocks, wrenches the prow aside towards the open sea. "Whither so far off the course? Make for the rocks Meneotes!" again shouted Gyas to call him back; when lo! he sees Cloanthus hard behind and keeping the nearer course. Between Gyas' ship and the roaring rocks he grazes his way nearer in on the left, suddenly passes his leader, and leaving the goal behind, gains safe water. Then indeed, anger burned deep in the young man's frame; tears sprang to his cheeks and heedless alike of his own pride and his

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<sup>45</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 455 ff.





crew's safety, he heaves timid Meneotes from the high stern sheer into the sea; himself steersman and captain he steps to the helm, cheers on his men, and turns the rudder shoreward. But Meneotes, when scarce he rose at last heavily from the sea bottom, old as he was and dripping in his drenched clothes, makes for the top of the crag and sat him down on the dry rock. The Teucrians laughed as he fell and swam, and they laugh as he spews the salt water from his chest.

Here a joyful hope was kindled in the two behind, Sergestus and Mnestheus, to pass the lagard Gyas. Sergestus takes the lead and nears the rock; yet is he ahead not by a whole boat's length, but in part alone; the rival Dragon overlaps with her prow. Then, pacing amidships among his crew, Mnestheus cheers them on: . . . "Win but this, my countrymen, and ward off disgrace!" Straining to the utmost, the men bend forward; with their mighty strokes the brazen poop quivers, and the ocean-floor flies from under them. Then rapid panting shakes their limbs, and parched mouths; while sweat streams down all their limbs. Mere chance brought them the glory craved. For while Sergestus, mad at heart, drives his prow inward towards the rocks and enters on the perilous course, he struck, alas! on a jutting reef. The cliffs were jarred, on the sharp flint the oars struck and snapped; the bow hung where it crashed. Up spring the sailors and, clamouring loudly at the delay, get out iron-shod pikes and sharp-pointed poles, or pick up in the flood their broken oars. But Mnestheus, cheered and enlivened by his very success, with swift play of oars and a prayer to the winds, seeks the sloping water and glides down the open sea. . . . And first he leaves Sergestus behind, struggling on the high rock and in shallow waters, making vain appeals for help and learning to race with broken oars. Then he overhauls Gyas, even the Chimaera with her huge bulk; she gives way, robbed of her helmsman. . . .



## PLATE XXI

Figures 1 to 4.

Aquatic scenes from four Roman sarcophagi. Note the alternate arm stroking of the swimmer in Figure 3.

Source: AJA, LXVI, (1962), Plate 77.





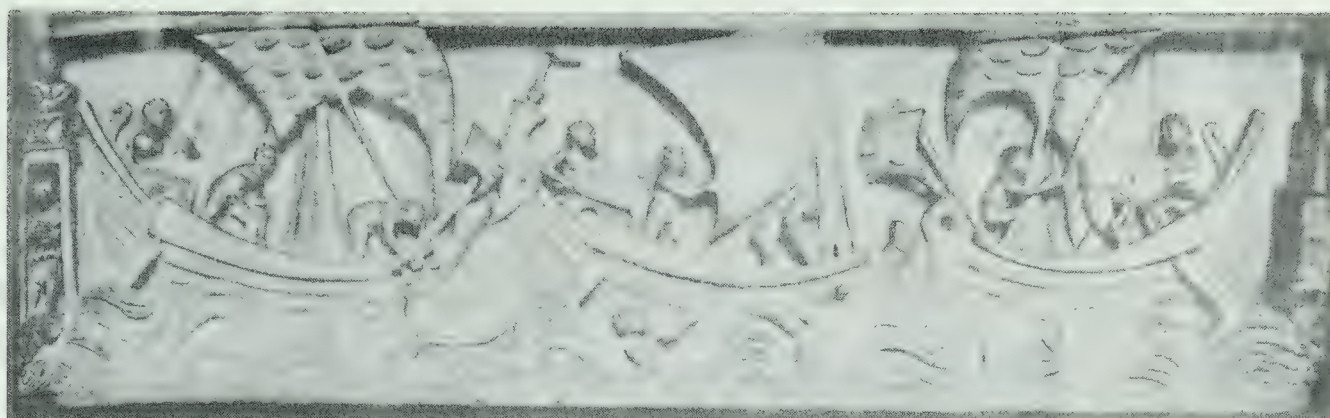


Figure 1.

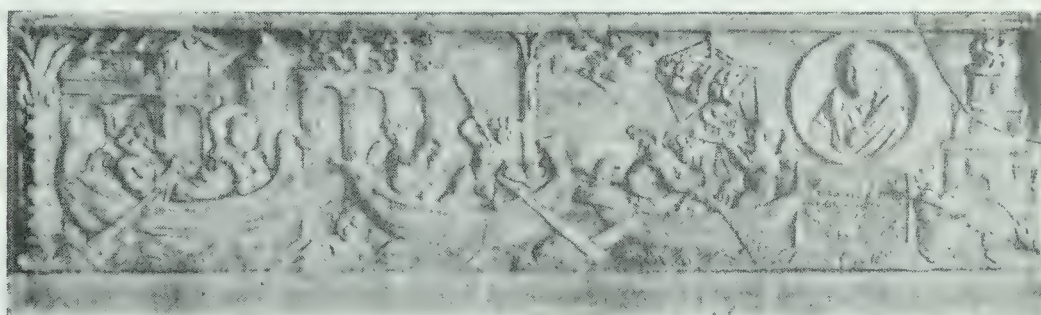


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

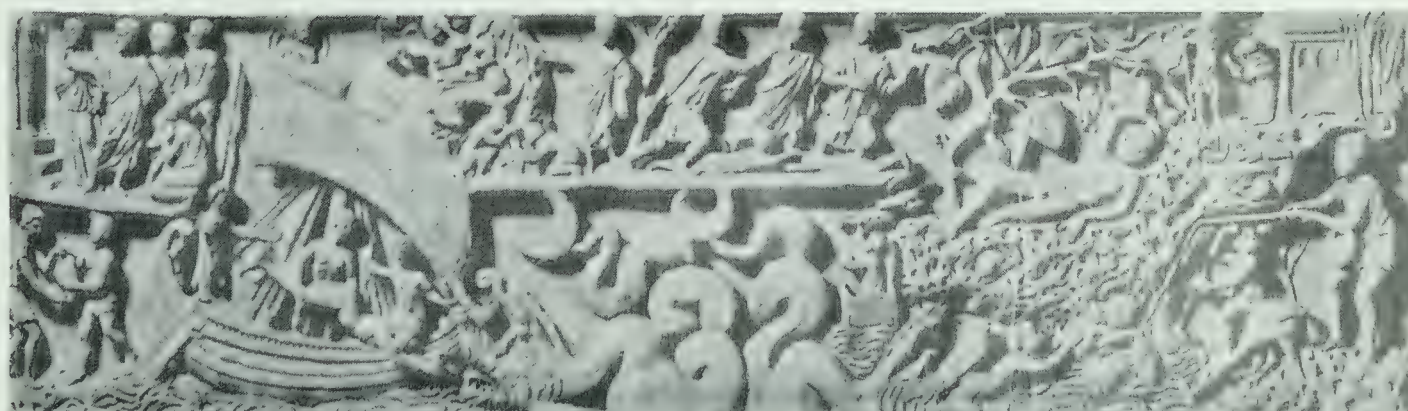


Figure 4.





## CHAPTER X

### MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

#### Acrobatics.

At the time of the Empire, acrobats, jugglers, and tight-rope walkers were commonly a part of the spectacles offered at banquets and at the large annual feasts.<sup>1</sup> At Trimalchio's banquet,<sup>2</sup> the guests were entertained by a boy-acrobat who is made to dance upon the rungs of a ladder held by an assistant, and to jump through burning hoops. Trimalchio seems to point out the lack of appreciation of such skill by the Romans, as he repeatedly remarks that it is a "thankless profession." An accident to the performer raises a cry, not of sympathy, but of anger for the fact that the dinner might have been ruined through the guests having to appear saddened by his death. Martial<sup>3</sup> regards acrobatics as "difficult trifles and puerilities," and degrading to the athlete who participates in them. He acknowledges the skill involved, but abhors its professional use. The building of pyramids, that "grow with soft entwining of bodies" is mentioned by Claudian<sup>4</sup> as having been provided for public entertainment. The Roman cavalry had need of acrobatic skill also, as it was the custom for a section of them to be provided with

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<sup>1</sup>Daremberg and Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquités--Grecques et Romaines, (Graz, Austria: Arkademische Druck u Verlagsanstalt, 1962), IV, 423. (See petaurum).

<sup>2</sup>Petronius op. cit. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Epigrams op. cit. ii. 86.

<sup>4</sup>Panegyric on the Consulship of Fl. Manlius Theodorus 320., trans. Maurice Platnaeur (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1922)





two horses each so that they could leap from one to the other during battle, as the ridden animal became fatigued. This they performed while fully armed.<sup>5</sup>

One of Martial's epigrams<sup>6</sup> depicts a form of sport which has similarities to the bull-leaping acrobatics of the ancient Minoan civilization. The performers in the epigram leap on the placid steers, hang onto the horns and even run along the shoulders of the beasts. It is possible that they are performing a variation of the spectacular leaps of the Cretans who turned somersaults onto, or over, the back of a bull after having been tossed from between the horns. Another type of bull-sport appears in the form of Thessalian bull-wrestling.<sup>7</sup> This was first exhibited by Caesar at Rome in 45 B.C.<sup>8</sup> The Thessalians would gallop on horseback beside the bull, then grasp the horns and twist back the neck, leaping from the horse to the bull at the same time, so that the weight of the rider would assist in the twisting and breaking of the bull's neck. Today's sport of bull-dogging contains many elements which are similar to this ancient form of bull-wrestling.

#### Hoop Play.

Mention of the Greek hoop, trochus, is frequent enough to suggest its wide use as a common amusement for both children and women.<sup>9</sup> Horace<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Livy op. cit. xxiii. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Op. cit. v. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Pliny Natural History op. cit. viii. 70. 182. Compare Suetonius op. cit. Claudius 21.

<sup>8</sup>Pliny Natural History op. cit.

<sup>9</sup>Carcopino, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>10</sup>Odes op. cit. iii. 24.



mentions it specifically as being of Greek origin, when he complains that Roman boys no longer care for riding and hunting but prefer trundling a hoop. From the tone of his words, it is apparent that he regrets the change not only for what he regards as its detrimental effect on present youth, but also because the disuse of the hardier sports might promote an increasing degeneracy in Romans of the future. In contrast to this attitude, Cato<sup>11</sup> includes "play with the hoop" in his Common Collection of Distichs. This collection is intended to be a guide for those who go astray in the path of conduct, so that "they might live with utmost glory and attain honour."

The Roman hoop sometimes underwent modifications so that it differed from that used by the Greeks.<sup>12</sup> The instrument used to propel and guide the hoop was either curved or contained a semi-circular loop in its stem and was called, because of its shape, clavis or key. The hoop itself often contained small rings around its circumference, so that a tinkling sound was produced as the hoop was trundled. From Martial's evidence,<sup>13</sup> they were noisy playthings, and this was probably necessary in the crowded streets of Rome, so that people might hear their approach and so avoid them. The emphasis on the noise of the hoops suggests that they were constructed of a metallic substance, probably iron or bronze.<sup>14</sup>

Horace<sup>15</sup> includes the hoop with the ball and the discus as play-

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<sup>11</sup>Minor Latin Poets op. cit. i. Prologue. 36.

<sup>12</sup>Daremberg and Saglio, op. cit., V, 492.

<sup>13</sup>Op. cit. xiv. 169.

<sup>14</sup>Daremberg and Saglio, loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Ars Poetica op. cit. 380.





things which will draw laughter to the unskilled performer from the circle of spectators. It is possible to interpret this statement as evidence of some form of hoop contest, as it is unlikely that a "crowded circle" would gather to watch children amusing themselves.

### Nut Games.

Among the many games enjoyed by Roman children, those played with nuts ranked among the most popular. So common were they, that nux relin-  
quere (to take leave of nuts) was an expression used frequently to denote the end of childhood.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Augustus, having given up military exercises after the Civil War, played nut games with little boys as a mental diversion.<sup>17</sup> Martial<sup>18</sup> demonstrates the attraction which these games had for children in his humorous remark that boy's buttocks have suffered through dallying over such frivolities instead of attending school. Some information concerning the nut games which were played may be obtained from Ovid's poem Nux.<sup>19</sup>

One game consisted of attempting to split in half, nuts which were lying on the ground. It is possible that to do this, a throwing-nut was employed as children lack the strength necessary to split a nut with a blow of the hand.

A second game was played with four nuts, and consisted of the

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<sup>16</sup>Daremberg and Saglio, op. cit., IV, 115.

<sup>17</sup>Suetonius op. cit. Augustus 83. <sup>18</sup>Op. cit. xiv. 18.

<sup>19</sup>Unfortunately, the original text is mutilated. The following methods of play were obtained from the Latin, assisted by Lafaye's interpretation in Daremberg and Saglio, loc. cit.



player's attempting to add his nut to three of his opponent's which were in position beneath it, so as to form a pyramid.

In another game, one nut was rolled down an inclined board, the player trying to touch with it any selected nut amongst the several below.

Odd-and-even, par impar, was also played with nuts, one player guessing the number of nuts enclosed in the hand of the other.

A further game was played by drawing the Greek triangular letter, delta, upon the ground, divided by a certain number of lines which were probably parallel with the base. The object of the game was to toss nuts so that they rolled into the triangle and remained there. The winner, the one who crossed the most lines within the delta, took all the nuts for himself.

A final game consisted of tossing nuts into a curved dish from a certain distance.

### Cottabos.

The game of cottabos had its origin in the custom of pouring libations to the gods at the commencement of a banquet.<sup>20</sup> If the wine, when poured from the cup, struck the ground with a clear ringing sound, the omen was regarded as a happy one, but if the sound was dull and heavy, this was considered as a sign of misfortune. Eventually, this ritual became a game and appeared in several variant forms. One of these variations

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<sup>20</sup>R. F. Clarke, "Games of the Ancients," Month, XIII, 213.





described by Nonnus<sup>21</sup> consists of the players throwing wine into the air to strike the head of a small statue, the quality of the sound thus made, determining the winner. Clarke<sup>22</sup> describes several other versions of the game. One form involves throwing dregs of wine in such a way as to sink small cups floating in a large bowl of water. In another, the wine is thrown from a distance into a metal basin, the object being to do so without spilling any of the wine. A third form makes use of a pair of scales, under each of which is placed a basin of water containing a metal figure. The players try to cause one of the scales to descend and strike the head of the figure with a ringing sound. According to Nonnus,<sup>23</sup> an "accurate dexterity" was needed for the throw.

#### Other Activities.

References to the amusements of children are very scant in the literature. Horace briefly mentions the building of toy houses, the playing of odd-and-even, and the riding of a long stick, as games played by children.<sup>24</sup> The game of odd-and-even was fairly common amongst children of Greece and Rome, and seems also to have been played occasionally by adults to decide the order of competition in their social games, such as cottabos.<sup>25</sup> It consisted of two players holding out a certain number of

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<sup>21</sup>Dionysiaca op. cit. xxxiii. 73 ff.

<sup>22</sup>Loc. cit.; c.f. Athenaeus Deipnosophists xv. 666 ff.

<sup>23</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup>Satires op. cit. ii. 3.

<sup>25</sup>Nonnus loc. cit.



fingers simultaneously, as one player called "Odd!" or "Even!" to correspond with the total. If his guess were correct, he was the winner. It became a mark of honour to be regarded as "one with whom you can play odd-and-even in the dark."<sup>26</sup>

Another activity borrowed from the Greeks by the Romans was top-spinning. Persius included among his highest ambitions as a boy, a desire to be unbeaten at "whipping the boxwood top."<sup>27</sup> Virgil also writes of a top which is kept spinning "under the twisted lash."<sup>28</sup>

Knuckle bones were usually employed for gambling purposes, but one variation of play, called pente litha,<sup>29</sup> consisted of throwing five knuckle bones, or small stones into the air. The player attempted to catch them on the back of his hand. If some were missed and fell to the ground, the player had to throw into the air again those on his hand, while he quickly gathered the fallen ones, and recaught, in the palm of his hand, those thrown.

"Buffet" was a Greek game, afterwards adopted by the Romans.<sup>30</sup> One player covers his face with his hands; another player strikes the first player, who must then guess as to which hand was used to strike him. This game was employed as a form of mockery against Jesus Christ when He

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<sup>26</sup>Fronto op. cit. Letter to Lord Marcus Caesar.

<sup>27</sup>Persius Satires op. cit. iii. 51.

<sup>28</sup>Aeneid op. cit. vii. 378 ff.

<sup>29</sup>Daremberg and Saglio, op. cit., IV, 1.

<sup>30</sup>Clarke, op. cit.





was in the custody of the Jewish tribunal:

And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee?<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>The New Testament The Gospel of St. Luke 23. 64. (Authorized Version).



## LITERARY REFERENCES

### ACROBATICS

Livy xxiii. 29.<sup>32</sup>

On the right wing were placed only those who, taking two horses apiece after the manner of performers, had the custom of leaping armed from the tired horse to the fresh, often in the very heat of battle; such was the agility of the men, and so well trained their breed of horses.

Pliny Natural History viii. 52. 182.<sup>33</sup>

It is a device of the Thessalian race to kill bulls by galloping a horse beside them and twisting back the neck by the horn; the dictator Caesar first gave this show at Rome.

Petronius Satyricon 53.<sup>34</sup>

But at last the acrobats came in. A very dull fool stood there with a ladder and made a boy dance from rung to rung and on the very top to the music of popular airs, and then made him hop through burning hoops, and pick up a wine jar with his teeth. No one was excited by this but Trimalchio, who kept saying that it was a thankless profession. There were only two things in the world that he could watch with real pleasure, acrobats and trumpeters; all other shows were silly nonsense. . . . Just as Trimalchio was speaking the boy fell. . . . The slaves raised a cry, and so did the guests, not over a disgusting creature whose neck they would have been glad to see broken, but because it would have been a gloomy finish to the dinner to have to shed tears over the death of a perfect stranger.

Petronius Satyricon Fragments. 15.<sup>35</sup>

Glossary of St. Dionysius: The springboard is a kind of game.  
Petronius, "Now lifted high at the will of the springboard."

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<sup>32</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. VI, 97. Army use of horse acrobatics.

<sup>33</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. III, 127. c.f. Suetonius Claudius 21. 3.

<sup>34</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 95. <sup>35</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. p. 331.





Martial Epigrams ii. 86.<sup>36</sup>

What if you bade Ladas unwittingly to mount the narrow ways of a springboard? 'Tis degrading to undertake difficult trifles; and foolish is the labour spent on puerilities.

Martial Epigrams v. 31.<sup>37</sup>

See how the troop leaps on the placid steers, and how complacently the bull accepts his appointed burden! This boy hangs on the tips of his horns, that one runs here and there along his shoulders and waves his weapons all over the ox. But the fierce beast stands unmoved and stark; the sand would not be safer; rather might the level ground cause a slip. Nor are their movements troubled; but of the award of the prize the boy is sure, the beast solicitous.

Juvenal Satires xiv. 265.<sup>38</sup>

Is there more pleasure to be got from gazing at men hurled from a springboard, or tripping down a tightrope, than from yourself--you who spend your whole life in a Corycian ship. . . finding your joy in importing sweet wine from the shores of ancient Crete, . . . Yet the man who plants his steps with balanced foot gains his livelihood thereby; that rope keeps him from cold and hunger; while you run the risk for the sake of a thousand talents or a hundred mansions.

Claudian Panegyric on the Consulship of Fl. Manlius Theodorus 320.<sup>39</sup>

Let us see acrobats who hurl themselves through the air like birds and build pyramids that grow with soft entwining of their bodies, to the summit of which pyramid rushes a boy fastened by a thong, a boy who, attached there by the foot or leg, executes a step-dance suspended in the air.

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 159. Ladas was a famous Spartan runner and Olympic winner. Petaurum--a springboard.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. I, 319

<sup>38</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 283. Juvenal is speaking of the risks to life that men endure to increase their fortunes.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 361.



## HOOP PLAY

Horace The Odes iii. 24.<sup>40</sup>

The freeborn lad, unpractised, knows not how to ride his steed;  
he fears to hunt, more skilled in games, whether you bid him try  
with Grecian hoop or rather with the dice the law forbids; while  
his perjured father defrauds his partner and his friends, and hast-  
ens to lay up store of money for his unworthy heir. His gains,  
ill-gotten, grow apace, 'tis true, yet something is ever lacking  
to the fortune incomplete.

Martial Epigrams xi. 21.<sup>41</sup>

Lydia is as widely developed as the rump of a bronze equestrian  
statue, as the swift hoop that resounds with its tinkling rings, as  
the wheel so often struck from the extended springboard (or so often  
struck by the acrobat in his flight).

Martial Epigrams xiv. 168.<sup>42</sup>

"The wheel must be fitted with a tyre: you give me a useful  
present; this to boys will be a hoop, but to me a tyre."

Martial Epigrams xiv. 169.<sup>43</sup>

Why do noisy rings wander round the wide orbit? That the crowd  
that meets them may give way to the tinkling hoops.

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<sup>40</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 257.

<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 253.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 499.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.





## NUT GAMES

Ovid Nux 71 ff.<sup>44</sup>

poma cadunt mensis non interdicta secundis,  
 et condit lectas parca colona nuces.  
 has puer aut certo rectas dilaminat ictu  
 aut pronas digito bisve semelve petit.  
 quattuor in nucibus, non amplius, alea tota est,  
 cum sibi subpositis additur una tribus.  
 per tabulae clivom labi iubet alter et optat,  
 tangat ut e multis quaelibet una suam.  
 est etiam par sit numerus qui dicat an impar,  
 ut divinatas auferat augur opes.  
 fit quoque de creta, qualem caeleste figuram  
 sidus et in Graecis littera quarta gerit.  
 haec ubi distincta est gradibus, quae constitit intus  
 quot tetigit virgas, tot capit ipsa nuces.  
 vas quoque saepe cavom spatio distante locatur,  
 in quod missa levi nux cadat una manu.

Martial Epigrams v. 84.<sup>45</sup>

Now the boy, sad to desert his nuts, is recalled to school by  
 his clamorous master; . . .

Martial Epigrams xiv. 18.<sup>46</sup>

Nuts appear a small stake, and one not ruinous; yet often has  
 that stake made prize of boy's buttocks.

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<sup>44</sup>In CSLP., ed. Fridericus W. Lenz (Torino: Azioni G. B. Paraavia  
 and C., 1955-56). This is a reconstructed text. A paraphrase of its  
 meaning may be found in the preceeding introduction to this Chapter, supra  
 p. 5.

<sup>45</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. I, 353.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Loeb Ed. II, 447.



## COTTABOS

Athenaeus Deipnosophists xv. 666 ff.<sup>47</sup>

Since, then, you are unfamiliar with this branch of study, let me inform you that the game of cottabos, in the first place, is a Sicilian invention, the Sicels being the first to devise it, as Critias the son of Callaeschus, makes clear in his Elegiac Verses in these words: "The cottabos is the chief product of Sicily; we set it up as a mark to shoot at with drops of wine (latages)." Dicaearchus of Messene, pupil of Aristotle, says in his book On Alcaeus that the word latage is likewise Sicilian. It means the drop of moisture which is left in the cup after it has been drunk out, and which the players tossed up into the basin with a twist of the hand. Cleitarchus, however, in his treatise On Glosses says that Thessalians and Rhodians call the clatter (cottabos) arising from the cups latage.

.....

Certain kinds of cottabos were called "descending." They require lampshades which can be raised and lowered again. . . . Antiphanes in Birth of Aphrodite: . . . How will you 'shoot cottabos'? A. I will show you step by step; whoever when he shoots at the pan causes the cottabos to fall-- B. The pan? What pan? Do you mean that little thing that lies up there on the top, the tiny platter? A. Yes, that's the pan--he becomes the winner. B. But how is one going to know that? A. Why, if he just hits it, it will fall on the Manes,<sup>48</sup> and there will be a very large clatter. . . . B. Take the cup and show me how you do it. A. Like a good flute player, you've got to curl your fingers round the handle, pour in a little wine--not too much!--and then shoot. . . ."

One must, indeed, bend the wrist very gracefully in shooting the cottabos, as Dicaearchus says, and in Plato, too, in Zeus Outraged. In that play, someone directs Hercules not to hold his wrist stiffly when he is about to shoot. And so they speak of the throwing of the cottabos as "the bend-toss" (ankyle) because in playing cottabos-games they bend the right wrist.

.....

Now the descending cottabos, as it is called, is of the following sort: it is a high lampshade holding the so-called Manes upon which the descending scale-pan,<sup>49</sup> when struck by the cottabos-throw fell into

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<sup>47</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. VII, 67 ff.

<sup>48</sup>A statuette representing a slave.

<sup>49</sup>Dish balanced on the rod.





a basin lying beneath. "And an accurate dexterity was needed for the throw."<sup>50</sup> The Manes is mentioned by Nicochares in Laconians.

There is, however, another variety of the game, played with a basin. This basin is filled with water, and empty cruets float on the surface; these they would try to sink by tossing the wine-drops upon them from their cups; the player who sank the most won the prizes.

Nonnus Dionysiaca xxxiii. 73 ff.<sup>51</sup>

A large silver basin stood for their game, and the shooting mark before them was a statue of Hebe shown in the middle pouring wine. The umpire in the game was the adorable Ganymedes, cup-bearer of Cronides, holding the garland. Lots were cast for the shots of unmixed wine, with varied movements of the finger:<sup>52</sup> these they held out, these they pressed upon the root of the hand closely joined together. A charming match it was between them.

Dainty-hair Hymenaios drew the first try. He took the cup, and shot the flying nectar-drop high in the air over the basin; but he offered no prayer then to his mother the Muse: darting from the cup the dew went scattering high through the air, but the leaping drops turned aside and swerving fell back upon the face of the statue so as to touch the top of the head without a sound.<sup>53</sup> Secondly, crafty Eros took hold of the lovely cup in a masterly way, and secretly in his heart prayed to Cyprogeneia; then with a steady eye on the mark, he shot the liquid into the distance--the dewey nectar went straight, unswerving, and curved around until it fell from the air upon the forehead above the temple with a plop. The elegant statue rang, and the basin echoed the sound of victory for the golden son of Cyprogeneia. Ganymedes laughing handed the dainty garland to Eros. Quickly he picked up the beautiful necklace and lifted the globe, and kept the two prizes of their clever-drop game. Bold Eros went skipping and dancing for joy and turned a somersault, and tried often to pull his rival's hands from his sorrowful face.

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<sup>50</sup>An anonymous verse.

<sup>51</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 471.

<sup>52</sup>Mora--the finger game: A. quickly opens and closes some of his fingers and B. has to say at once how many he has held out. This was to determine, apparently, who was to throw first. c.f. par impar, Ovid Nux.

<sup>53</sup>Thus it was not a fair hit; the mark must make an audible sound or, in some forms of the game, turn over, to count.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Virgil Aeneid vii. 378 ff.<sup>54</sup>

As at times a top, spinning under the twisting lash, which boys intent on the game drive in a great circle through an empty court--urged by the whip it speeds on round and round; the puzzled childish throng hang over it in wonder, marvelling at the whirling box-wood; the blows give it life.

Horace Satires ii. 3. 246 ff.<sup>55</sup>

Building toy-houses, harnessing mice to a wee cart, playing odd-and-even, riding a long stick--if these things delight a bearded man, lunacy would plague him.

Quintilian Institutio Oratoria x. 7. 11.<sup>56</sup>

. . . knack which makes possible those miraculous tricks which we see jugglers and masters of sleight of hand perform upon the stage, in such a manner that the spectator can scarcely help believing that the objects which they throw into the air come to hand of their own accord, and run where they are bidden.

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<sup>54</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. II, 29.

<sup>55</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. p. 173.

<sup>56</sup>Op. cit., Loeb Ed. IV, 139.





## PLATE XXII

Figure 1.

A wall painting from Chiusi (Ancient Clusium) showing an acrobat performing a somersault from a petaurum with two assistants to check his landing.

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate XXII, Figure 1.

Figure 2.

A boy trundling a hoop.

Source: W. Zschietzschmann, Hellas and Rome, (London: Zwemmer, 1959), p. 178.

Figure 3.

Ladies playing pente litha.

Source: E. Pfuhl, Masterpieces of Greek Drawing and Painting, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), Plate 117.



## PLATE XXII



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.





## PLATE XXIII

Figure 1.

A fresco showing winged cupids playing children's games.

Source: Paoli, op. cit., Figure 52.

Figure 2.

A Pompeian wall painting of a children's game. A nail is driven into the floor and a piece of rope tied to it. The game evidently consists of one player holding this rope and suffering the blows of his friends until he succeeds in striking or catching one of the other players. (c.f. Figure 1.).

Source: Schreiber, op. cit., Plate LXXIX, Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Two types of Greek whipping-tops, which were also used by Roman children.

Source: British Museum, A Guide to Greek and Roman Life, op. cit., p. 196.





Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.





## PLATE XXIV

Figure 1.

Children's games are depicted in a sarcophagus relief. Three games are shown; the group on the left and the group on the right are playing nut games described by Ovid; the centre group is playing the game illustrated in Plate XXIII, Figures 1 and 2.

Source: Grant Showerman, Rome and the Romans, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 373.

Figure 2.

Children's games in a sarcophagus relief. The group on the left is playing with small hoops or wheels. The group on the right seems to be playing "cock-fighting."

Source: Paoli, op. cit., Figure 51.

Figure 3.

Children's games in a sarcophagus relief, depicting the games described by Ovid.

Source: Johnston, op. cit., p. 141.







Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.





## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Concepts of Roman physical education during the first two centuries A.D. saw a merging of Greek and Roman elements which was never fully accomplished. It was inevitable that the old Roman stoicism would be influenced by Greek liberalism yet the change was slow, and the imperfect character of this amalgamation was due largely to the differences in the cultures of the two peoples. Physical exercise in the early Republic mainly followed utilitarian principles. It was strongly linked with labour on the land, and military service with the Roman Legion. There appears to have been little popular participation in recreative physical activity during this early period.

The Hellenic influence upon Rome mushroomed at a time when an immense volume of trade and bounty led to the existence of a prosperous middle-class. The rise of capitalism at different periods in history has been accompanied by increased leisure time; the Roman era was no exception. During the period of the empire, many rulers exhibited strong pro-Hellenic sympathies. This combination, together with a generosity in expenditure, resulted in the construction of baths and circuses, and the granting of an abundance of leisure time for the enjoyment of new found peace and prosperity. The baths and their accompanying activities came to occupy an important place in the Hellenic-Roman world, but though the physical habits of the Romans were greatly modified by the infiltration of Greek practices, the Roman ideal of physical education remained intrinsically different from that



of the Greek. The influence of the utilitarian outlook of the Romans is constantly found in their views of physical exercise. Mention of individual delight in play has tended to be obscured by an overemphasis upon public exhibitions, gladiatorial combats, and races in the Circus. In view of the extreme density of the population of Rome, the emphasis on spectator sports is hardly surprising. This physical circumstance, combined with the fact that popular attention has been given to those passages of Roman authors which detail the more spectacular aspects of society, has drawn the attention of historians away from everyday recreative physical activities.

The Romans, however, were not only soldiers, orators, lovers-of-spectacle, and adherents of a "practical" philosophy. They have emerged, through the collected writings of their peers, as recognizable progenitors of contemporary society. The enthusiastic youths expending their energies in vigorous ball-play may be seen on any summer weekend in today's parks. A modern bathing establishment would be just as noisy to live near as it was in Seneca's day. The architecture of this establishment may have changed, but admiration of the new in contrast to the outmoded has remained unchanged since Roman times. A villa which had belonged to a famous Roman hero of an earlier period had a very small utilitarian bath attached to it, which was scorned by the "modern" Romans a few generations removed. The rich Romans who added palaestras to their villas, today would be found sunbathing beside the kidney-shaped swimming pools they have added to their landscaped estates. The seventy-year old man who kept his youth by playing ball is now a retired businessman, who wards off old age and heart attacks by playing golf. "Modern" isometric exercises were suggested to those ancient





Romans who wished to increase their strength. The Roman spectator lives again in the crowds at the football and hockey stadiums, and at the race track. The little boy who spins a plastic top on the sidewalk today could have lived two thousand years ago.

These are the Romans who have assumed shape and personality through the literature relating to their activities in leisure moments--the hunter, the swimmer, the horseman, the ball-player, the archer, the athlete and the non-athlete, the boxer, and the cottabos player. Their very real existence would surely satisfy Mr. Dooley:<sup>1</sup>

I know histry isn't thrue, Hinnessy, because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Sthreet. If any wan comes along with a histry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' married, owin' th' grocery man and bein' without hard-coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not before. . . . Histry is a post-mortem examination. It tells ye what a country died iv. But I'd like to know what it lived iv.

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<sup>1</sup>"Observations by Mr. Dooley," cited in Caroline Ware, The Cultural Approach to History, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 3.



## EPILOGUE

In the writing of any thesis, problems become evident, which, through his close contact with the thesis area itself, and based upon his own professional experience, the author is able to pass on to other students who may wish to pursue allied areas of investigation. Lecturing experience within the historical sphere of physical education, has brought the author to realize the lack of adequate source material which is available to students and teachers. The present study was undertaken in an attempt to help alleviate this deficiency.

Through reading the translated versions of ancient Roman authors, it became obvious that there is a definite need for those physical educators who have an adequate knowledge of Latin, to examine the latin texts as a check on scholars who have been too liberal in their translations. To the physical educator, specific details of performances and activities are important.

It is annoying to read of "tennis-courts," games of "tennis," throwing of "quoits," or such vague translations as "ball-playing," when specific games are mentioned in the latin text. Students, searching for the early beginnings of particular sports, may be misled by these vagaries. The inadequate knowledge of the activities of the ancients could be due to this lack of attention to detail by translators who are without physical education backgrounds.

It is not intended that these recommendations be applied only to translated texts. It has become evident that there are authors whose works





have not been published in translated form. Perhaps these works contain the details of games which are presently lacking definition. Physical educators could gain stature in the eyes of their academic colleagues by taking the initiative in publishing these translations.

But let the student not be directed only to the writings of the ancient Romans. There is a need, at the present time, for a study parallel to this one, based on the writings of the ancient Greeks. Robinson has made a great contribution in this area, but the necessary confines of her book<sup>1</sup> have left many specific aspects of Greek physical education virtually untouched.

It is equally important that other early cultures be examined, for example, Sumerian, Babylonian, Hittite and Assyrian, as well as the early societies of all countries of the world, for example, The Australian Aborigines, the Southern, Central and North American Indians, the Pacific Islanders and the peoples of the ancient Oriental civilizations. In many of these societies, a lack of literary evidence makes anthropological reports of prime importance, nevertheless, some information may be gleaned by the student reading for evidence of games and physical activities. When these studies have been completed, the Mediterranean and the world scenes may be viewed as a whole and research studies on the geography of games undertaken.

In the meantime, there is much scope for students with an

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Sources for the History of Greek Athletics, op. cit.



interest in historical work in physical education to make valuable contributions to the profession, through studies parallel to the present one, embracing other civilizations.





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## APPENDIX A.

### RULERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO A.D. 300

Augustus	27 B.C.-A.D. 14	
Tiberius	14-37	Julio-Claudian emperors
Caligula	37-41	
Claudius	41-54	
Nero	54-68	
Galba	68-69	Frontier legions held control
Otho		
Vitellius		
Vespasian		
Vespasian	69-79	Flavian emperors
Titus	79-81	
Domitian	81-96	
Nerva	96-98	Antonine emperors
Trajan	98-117	
Hadrian	117-138	
Antoninus Pius	138-161	
Marcus Aurelius	161-180	
Commodus	180-192	
Septimius Severus	192-211	



Caracalla	211-217
Macrinus	217-218
Elagabalus	218-222
Severus Alexander	222-235

Maximinus	235-238
Decius	249-251
Valerian	253-260
Gallienus	253-268
Claudius Gothicus	268-270
Aurelian	270-275
Proleus	276-282

Diocletian	285-305
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The Military  
Anarchy





## APPENDIX B.

### THE AUTHORS

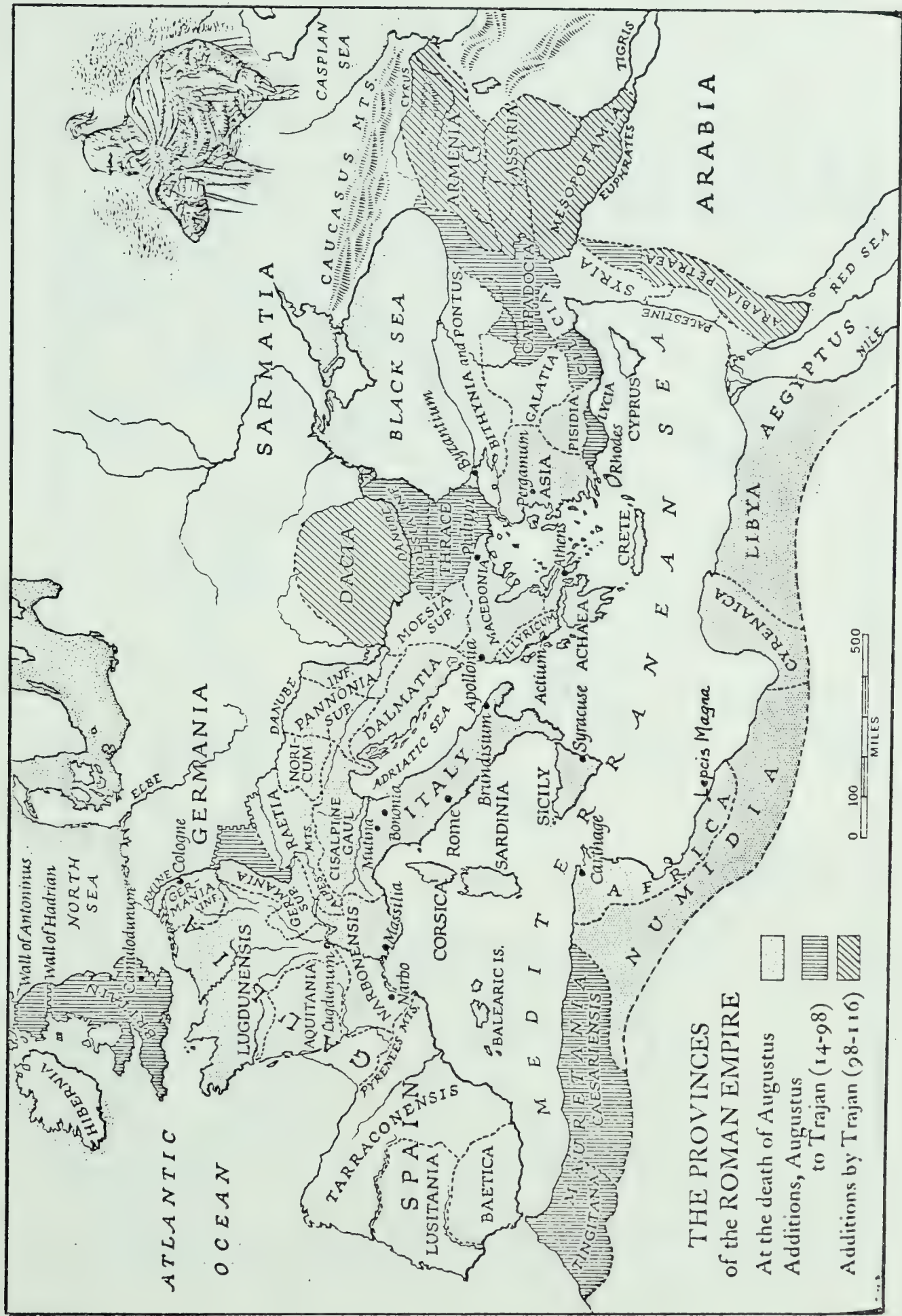
Varro	116-27 B.C.
Cicero	106-43 B.C.
Virgil	70-19 B.C.
Horace	65-8 B.C.
Augustus	63 B.C.-A.D. 14
Dionysius of Halcaruassus	Ca. 60 B.C.-after 7 B.C.
Strabo	Ca. 64 B.C.-A.D. 21
Livy	59 B.C.-A.D. 21
Ovid	43 B.C.-A.D. 18
Grattius	Period of Augustus
Vitruvius	Period of Augustus
Seneca	4 B.C.-A.D. 65
Pisonius	First century A.D.
Celsus	First century A.D.
Silius Italicus	First century A.D.
Petronius	Period of Nero
Pliny the Elder	23-79
Quintilian	Ca. 35-100
Martial	Ca. 40-104
Statius	40-96
Plutarch	Ca. 42-126
Tacitus	Ca. 55-117



Juvenal	Ca. 60-130
Pliny the Younger	Ca. 61-113
Suetonius	Ca. 77-150
Fronto	Ca. 100-166
Galen	130-200
Dio Cassius	Ca. 150-230
Aelian	Late second century
Athenaeus	Early third century
Sidonius	431-482
Ausonius	310-395
Vegetius	Third or fourth century
Isidore	Late fourth century







From Carl Roebuck, The World of Ancient Times, op. cit., p. 576.

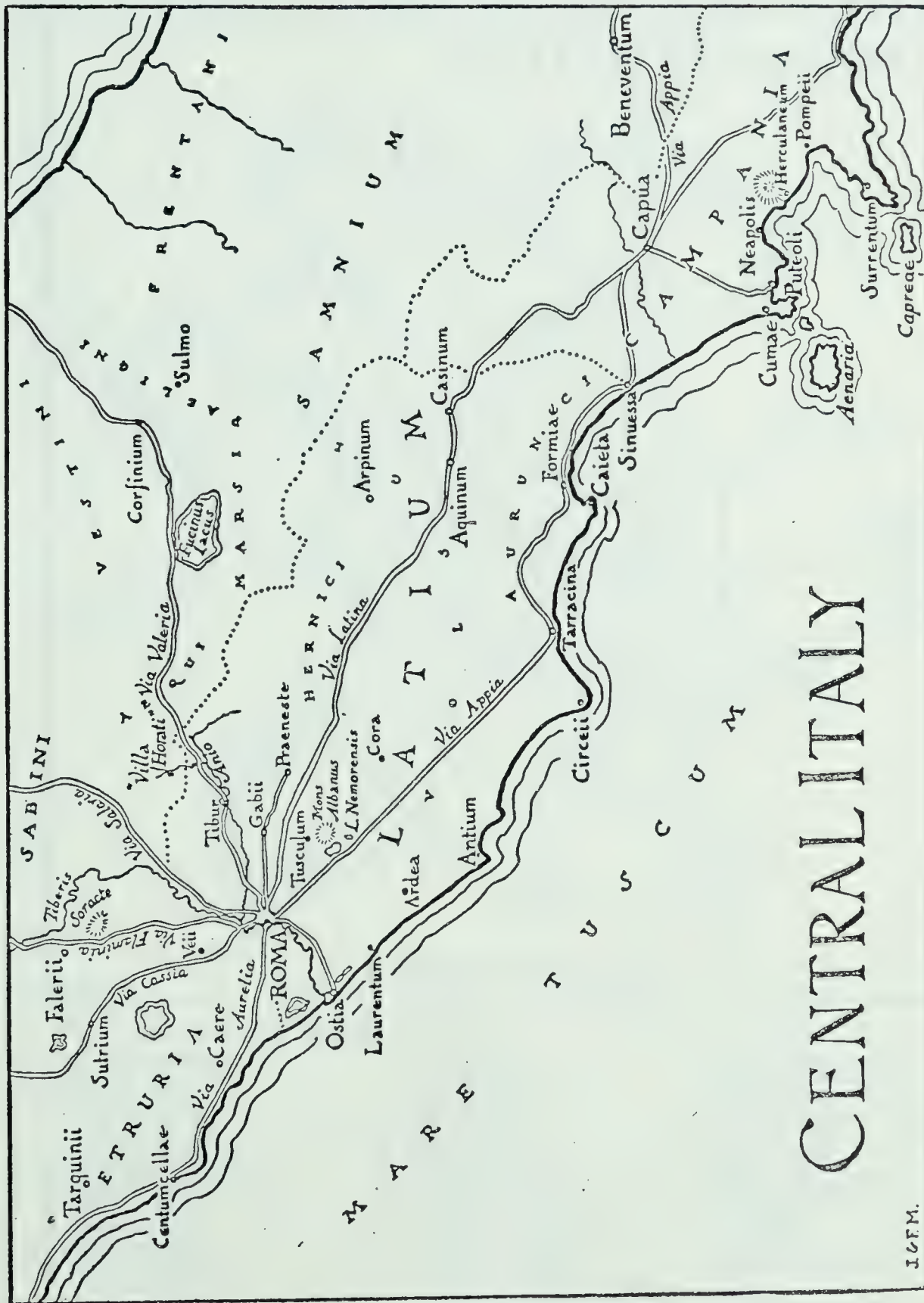




From Frank C. Moore, The Roman's World, op. cit., p. 441.

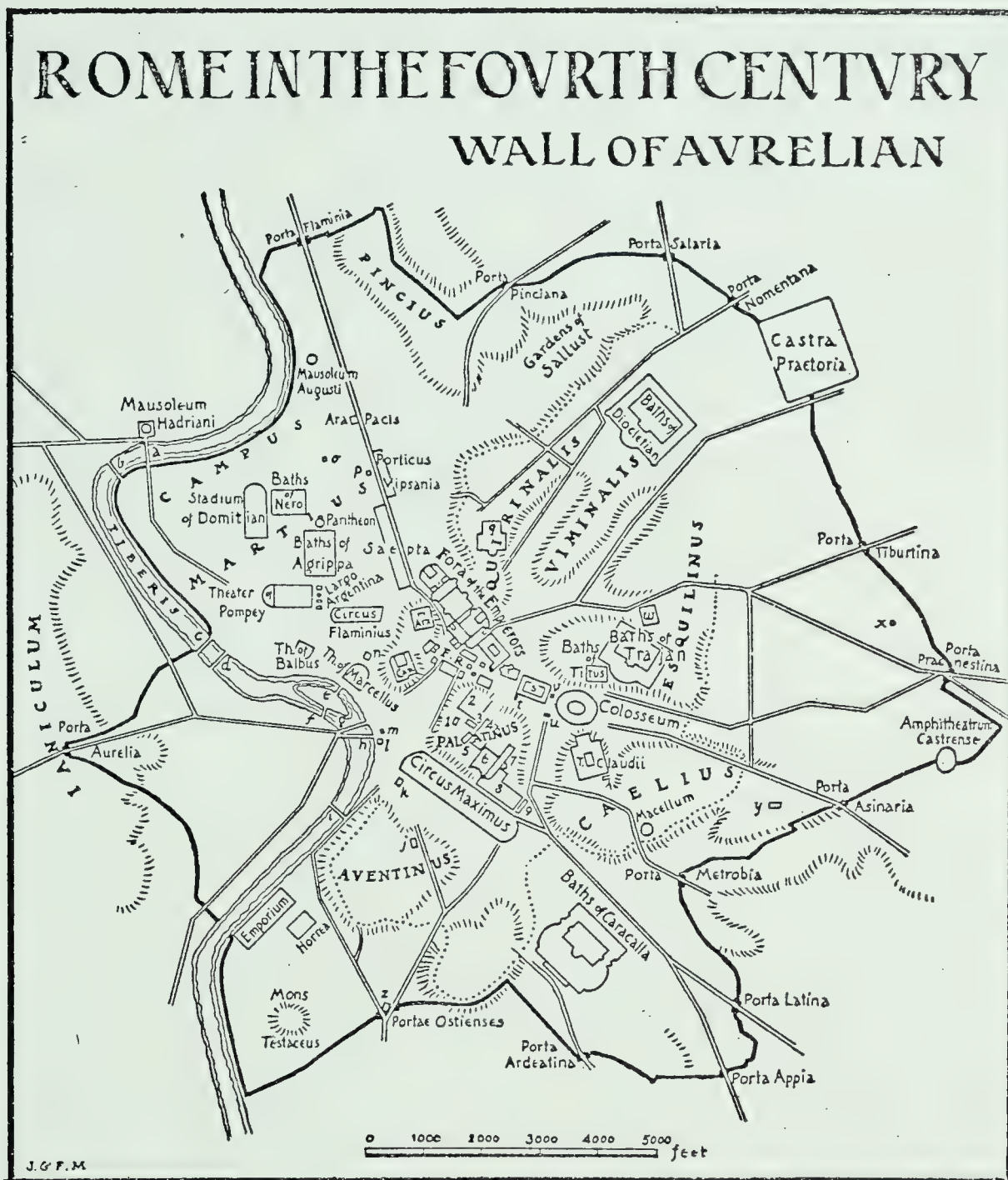






From Frank C. Moore, *The Roman's World*, op. cit., p. 440.





Capitolium, with Temple of Jupiter		F.R. Forum Romanum	
1 Temple of Ceres	d Pons Aurelius	p Column of M. Aurelius	
2 Domus Tiberiana	e Pons Fabricius	q Baths of Constantine	
3 Domus Liviae (Augusti)	f Pons Cestius	r Basilica of Constantine	
4 Domus Flavia	g Pons Aemilius	s Temple of Venus and Rome	
5 Palatine Temple of Apollo (?)	h Pons Sublicius	t Arch of Titus	
6 Domus Augustana	i Pons Probi	u Arch of Constantine	
7 Hippodromus (Garden)	j Temple of Diana	v Colossus Neronis	
8 Domus Severi	k Temple of Ceres	w Porticus Liviae	
9 Septizonium	l Temple of Portunus (?)	x Nymphaeum ("Minerva Medica")	
a Pons Aelius	m Temple of "Fortuna Virilis"	y Domus Lateranorum	
b Pons Neronianus	n Temple of Apollo	z Pyramid of Cestius	
c Pons Agrippae	o Column of Antoninus Pius		

A dotted line marks the Servian Wall, a large part of which had already disappeared.

From Frank C. Moore, The Roman's World, op. cit., p. 446.



















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